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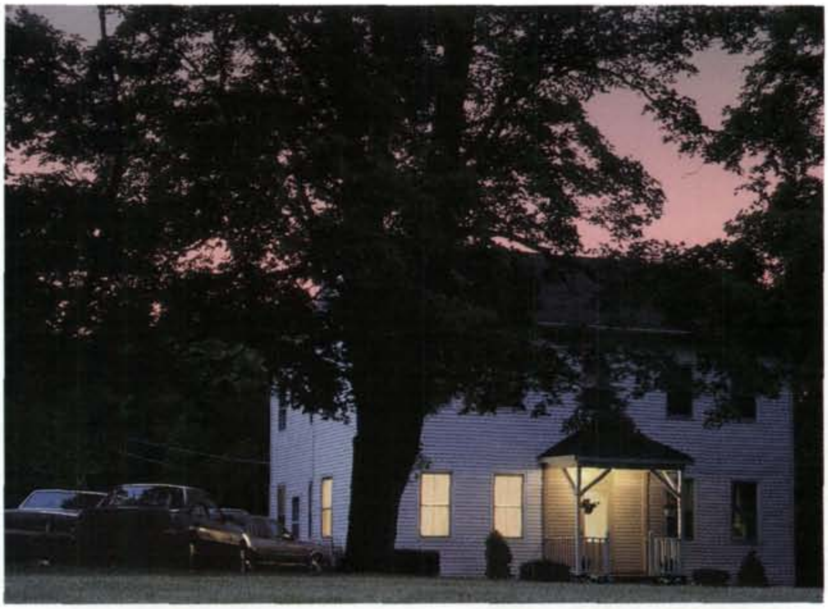

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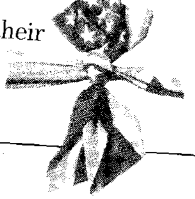

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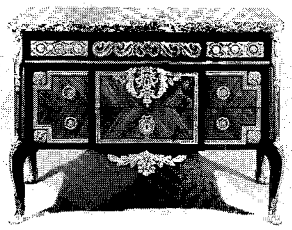

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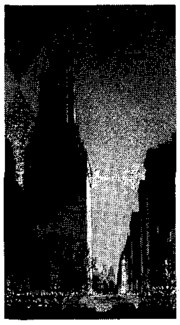

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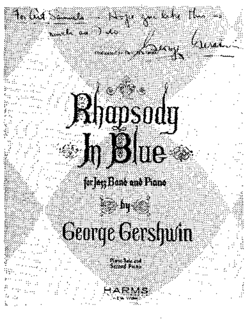

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

IT'S a little-known fact of theatrical life in New York that award-giving changes the nature of a production. This is not because the quality of an actor's performance changes when he has won a Tony or Drama Desk nomination or award and feels that he has nothing left to gain or lose or strive for, but because once the producer starts advertising the awards or nominations that a play or musical has garnered, the composition of its audience changes. People begin coming to see the play or musical for the wrong reasons—not out of any real interest in the work but simply because it has won awards. This is what producers want: when they advertise that a particular show ("Starmites," say) was nominated for *x* Tony awards, they are banking on the fact that people will come to see it who don't know that the show was in competition with three other equally bad musicals (say, "Carrie," "Welcome to the Club," and "Legs Diamond"). Unfortunately, an audience that goes to the theatre for the wrong reasons is an audience that is hard to play to.

Among this season's offerings that we feel might be worth attending before the hype surrounding the various upcoming awards begins to take its toll—if one had been planning to see the shows anyway—are: Wendy Wasserstein's "The Heidi Chronicles" (which has already suffered somewhat from having won a Pulitzer), at the Plymouth; A. R. Gurney's "The Cocktail Hour," at the Promenade; and Brian Friel's "Aristocrats," at Theatre Four.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedules and ticket information.)

The Blessing—A play by Clare Coss, with Anita Gillette, Kelly Bishop, and Louisa Horton. Previews begin May 11. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Cymbeline—The ninth production in the Shakespeare Marathon stars Joan Cusack as Imogen. JoAnne Akalaitis is the director. With an original score by Philip Glass. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Eleemosynary—A play by Lee Blessing, with Eileen Heckart, Joanna Gleason, and Jennie Moreau. Directed by Lynne Meadow. Opens May 9 at 8, and will run through May 21. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Equity Library Theatre—The final production of the season will be a revival of **Gigi**, Lerner and Loewe's 1973 musical that was based on the movie of the same name. Opens May 11, and will run through June 4. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. 663-2028.)

S. J. Perelman . . . In Person—Lewis J. Stadlen plays the American author and humorist in this one-man show written by Bob Shanks. Previews through May 16. Opens May 17 at 8. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Yankee Dawg You Die—A two-character play by Philip Kan Gotanda, with Stan Egi and Sab Shimono. Previews through May 13. Opens May 14 at 7. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Approaching Zanzibar—Jane Alexander and Harris Yulin in a new play by Tina Howe. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Aristocrats—Brian Friel's portrait of the family of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. It is faultlessly performed by Niall Buggy (an astonishing actor, who got his start at the Abbey Theatre), John Pankow, Kaiulani Lee, John Christopher Jones, and Margaret Colin, among others, under the direction of Robin Lefèvre. Distinguished setting, lighting, and costumes by John Lee Beatty, Dennis Parichy, and Jane Greenwood. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17			

Black and Blue—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, Savion Glover, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Born Yesterday—Madeline Kahn's performance as Billie Dawn (the role that made Judy Holliday famous) is the only good thing about this revival of Garson Kanin's 1946 political fable. Ed Asner is entirely inadequate as the scrap-metal tycoon who makes the mistake of hiring a *New Republic* writer to educate his mistress. So, unfortunately, is Daniel Hugh Kelly, who plays the journalist. (2/13/89) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

Brimstone and Treacle—Dennis Potter wrote this stage version of his own 1975 television film, which the BBC, having commissioned and paid for the thing, found too "nauseating" to transmit. (They broadcast the film in 1987.) It has none of the subtlety or complexity of either "The Singing Detective" or Potter's novel "Blackeyes." The play is a hodgepodge of images borrowed from Pinter and Peter Nichols—the devil descends on a couple trapped in a benighted existence with their spastic daughter—and seems to date from a period before Dennis Potter figured out that he was Dennis Potter. (Interart, 549 W. 52nd St. 246-1050. Closes May 21.)

Cantorial—Ira Levin's play about a couple who move into a renovated apartment on the Lower East Side that was once a synagogue, only to find that the place is haunted (by the restless spirit of an intrusive cantor, no less). Anthony Fusco and Woody Romoff are as cute as all getout playing, respectively, the young man of uncertain origins who finds himself wanting to be a Jew and the wise old bird who owns the deli across the street. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Chu Chem—A small Jewish delegation (2m, 1f) visits China in the fourteenth century and finds traces of another, larger delegation that went there a thousand years before that. This musical is probably harmless if you can manage to ward off the cutes. (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 246-0102.)

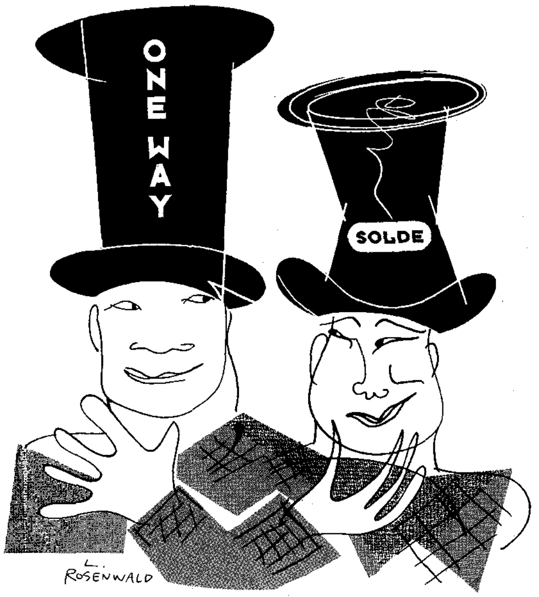
The Cocktail Hour—A dramatist returns home to break the news to his prosperous family that he has written a play about them and to ask their permission to have it produced. More easily said than done. A. R. Gurney's humor has never been more sparkling, his characters never more engaging. Under Jack O'Brien's direction, Nancy Marchand gives a marvellous performance as the hero's mother, and Holland Taylor and Keene Curtis do well also. (11/7/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Forbidden Broadway 1989—A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along with Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Roxie Lucas, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath—inspired mimics all. (9/26/88) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

The Forbidden City—This domestic drama about a black family living prosperously on the edge of suburban Philadelphia in 1936 was written by Bill Gunn, who died the day before it opened. It's essentially an unfinished play, as full of interest as it is of excess and inconsistency. The writing ranges from the embarrassingly overwrought to the inspired, as does the acting, under Joseph Papp's direction. With Gloria Foster, Akili Prince, and Frankie R. Faison. (4/17/89) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Ghetto—A play about an actual theatre in the ghetto in Vilna, Lithuania, during the Holocaust, or, more precisely, a play about an attempt to produce a show there. Joshua Sobol is the author; Stephen McHattie, Jarlath Conroy, and Donal Donnelly, poor souls, appear in the leading rules. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

The Heidi Chronicles—Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enable her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With a superb cast, led by Joan Allen. (12/26/88) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

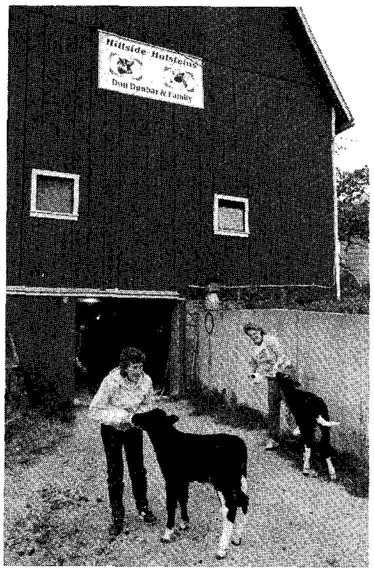


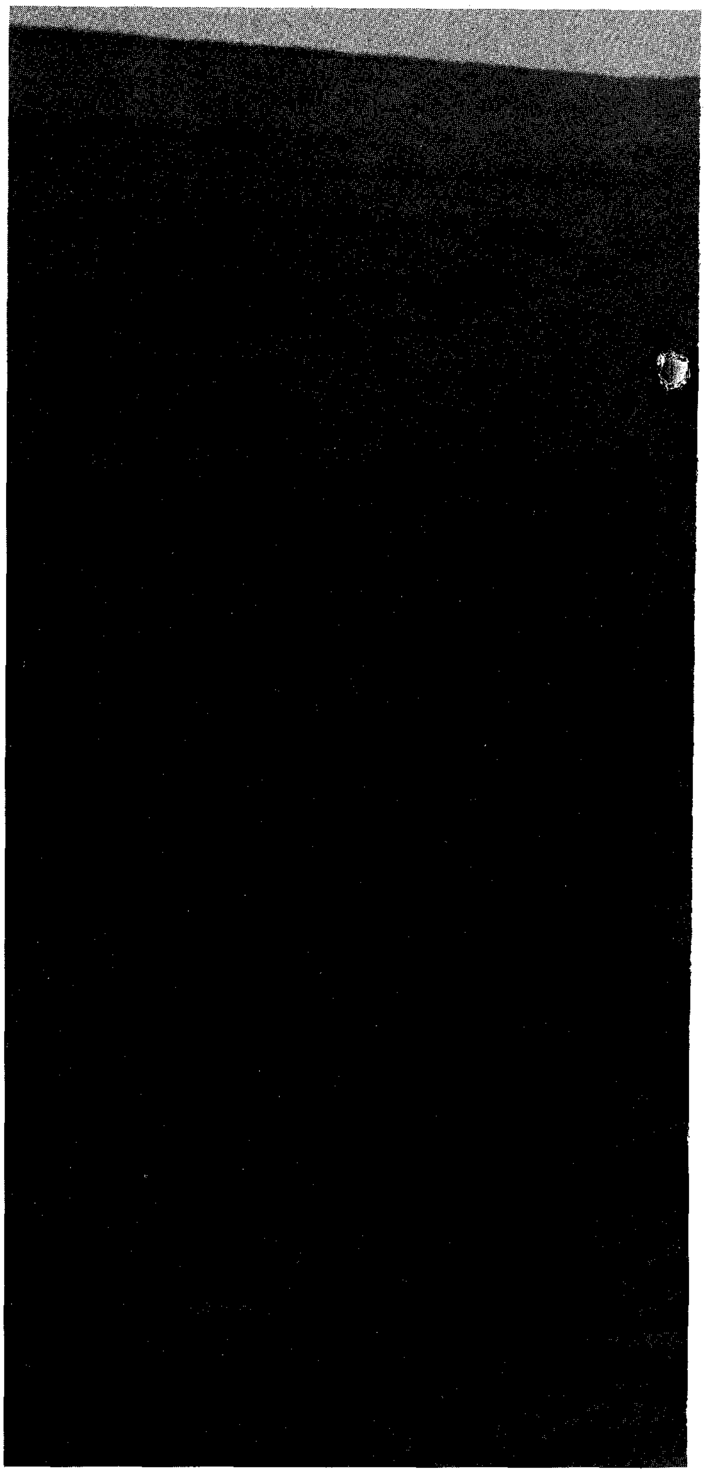
Ping Chong's "Noiresque"

I Could Go On Lip-Synching!—This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcana is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. Certainly this is the strangest show in town. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives—Comedy





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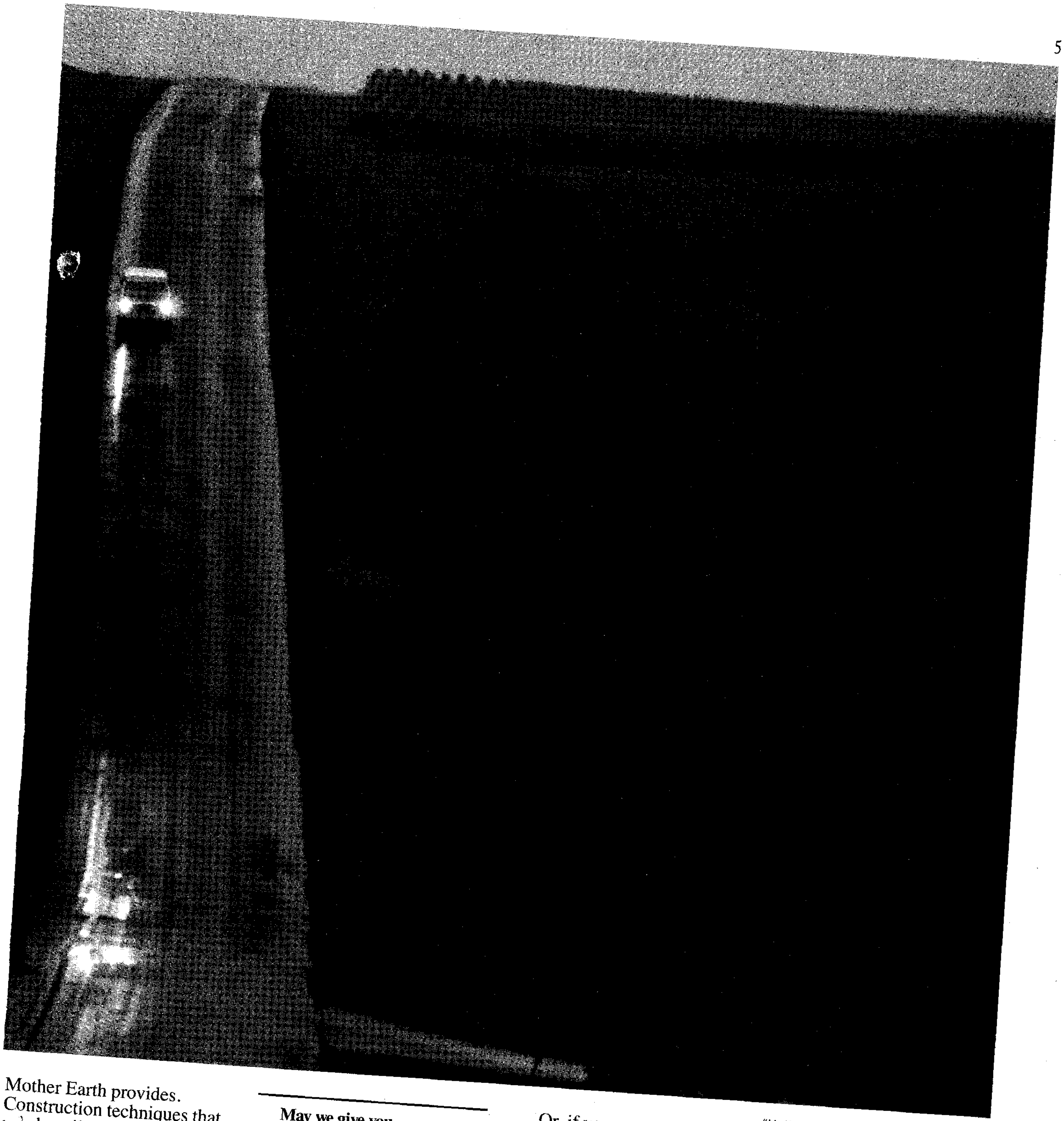

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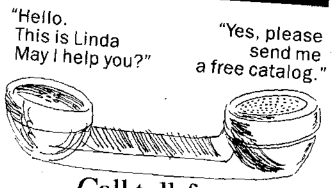

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skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Largely New York—Bill Irwin's new, wordless comedy. Performed by a company of nineteen, including Mr. Irwin himself. (Reviewed in this issue.) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Caroline Lagerfelt, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks make up the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Romberg's **NEW MOON.** (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes May 28.)

Love Letters—Staged readings of A. R. Gurney's new two-character play. May 8 at 8, Elaine Stritch and Jason Robards; May 14 at 7, Maria Tucci and Christopher Reeve; and May 15 at 8, Richard Thomas and a reader to be announced. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

ART ATTACK

Fabian Palomino is not a centaur born of the union between a teen idol and a horse. He's Special Counsellor to Governor Cuomo and chairman of the Battery Park City Authority, and he's just cancelled a sculpture by Mark di Suvero planned for the development's North Park.

Word has it that the chairman dislikes the look of rusted metal. But perhaps he just got the willies from all the controversy over Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc," and thinks that large metal sculptures all look pretty much the same, especially when they begin to oxidize. Never mind that di Suvero's sculptures, unlike Serra's, tend to be viewer-friendly, even playful; that the artist has amply demonstrated his civic spirit by creating the exuberant Socrates Sculpture Park, in Long Island City; or that the Authority's Fine Arts Committee, which approved the commission, has won high marks for sensitivity to the public dimension of public art.

The Night Hank Williams Died—Larry L. King, whose "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" was a hit some years ago, has again written a strong play with music, set in a saloon in an obscure Texas town in 1952. The performance, under Christopher Ashley's direction, is satisfying and more, and so are Mr. King's songs. With Betsy Aidem, Matt Mulhern, and Darren McGavin. (2/20/89) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Noiresque: The Fallen Angel—A new theatrical work, conceived and staged by Ping Chong. Presented by Pan Asian Rep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. Closes May 27. For information about tickets call 245-2660.)

Only Kidding—A play, by Jim Geoghan, that looks at the lives of stand-up comedians. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle, and Janet Zarish plays his adversary (with a difference). They are ably supported by Scotty Bloch, James Murtaugh, and Arch Johnson. The performance as a whole is a credit to Gloria Muzio, who directed it. An import from the Hartford Stage Company. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Rumors—This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by Christine Baranski, Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, and Cynthia Darlow, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (11/28/88) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Shirley Valentine—Pauline Collins gives a funny, beguiling performance as a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. Miss Collins is the only actor, and she is backed every inch of the way by Willy Russell, who wrote the play, and by Simon Callow, who directed it. (2/27/89) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Songs of Paradise—A musical based on the works of the Yiddish poet Itsik Manger. In Yiddish and English; with a book by Miriam Hoffman and Rena Berkowicz Borow, and music by Rosalie Gerut. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 21.)

Starmites—This musical about a girl who enters the world of her favorite comic-book characters is pretty much what you'd expect. The style of the main plot—visually and otherwise—leans toward Michael Jackson, aerobic dancing, and Andrew Lloyd Webber; the style of the subplot is more in the direction of leather. We lasted almost to intermission. (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Tale of Two Cities—Everett Quinton's over-the-top one-man version of Dickens' novel has Miss Pross literally hanging from the ceiling. Unfortunately, his performance is more spirited than it is consistently funny. Best is the word "'BLOOD" scrawled on the bathroom wall. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

A Thrill a Moment—A musical revue featuring songs that William (Mickey) Stevenson, who was once head of A. & R. at Motown, had a hand in creating. You'll hear "Devil with the Blue Dress On," "Pride and Joy," and "Dancing in the Street," to name a few. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 869-3981.)

What the Butler Saw—An impeccable revival of Joe Orton's mischievous 1969 farce, with Joseph Maher, Charles Keating, and Angela Thorton in the leading roles, and director John Tillinger at the helm. The production makes an unremittingly funny evening. (3/20/89) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes May 10.)

LONG RUNS

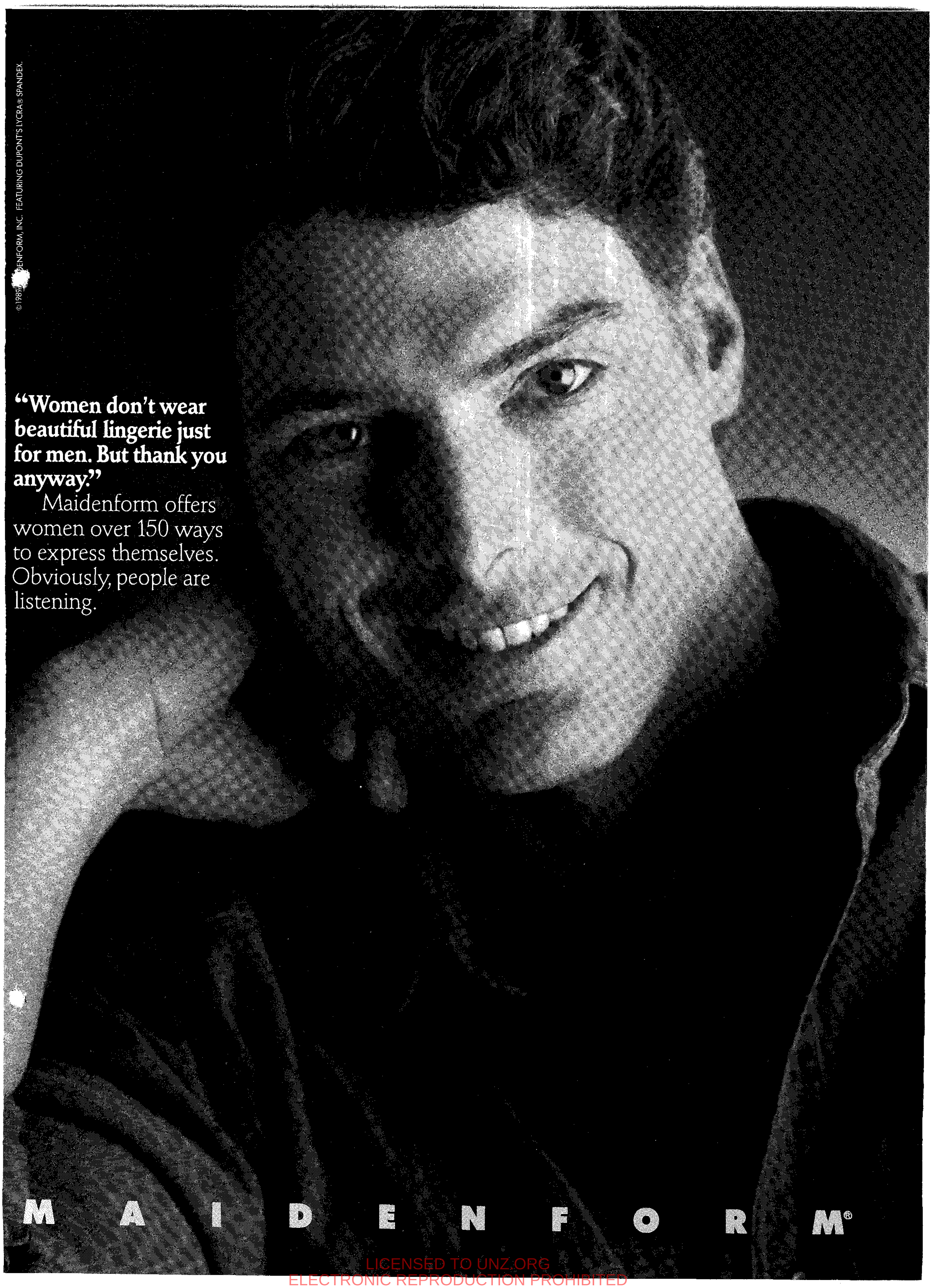
ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Leslie Uggams and Bill McCutcheon, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction, and to the sets and costumes of John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently turned twenty-nine. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful and funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play, with John Rubinstein and B. D. Wong. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SARAFINA!:** This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

CHOREOGRAPHERS from Isadora Duncan on have advanced the idea that music written for the concert hall can support theatrical dancing. But a composition's concert form is not always ideal for dance. Fokine saw no problem with Glazunov's orchestrations of Chopin's piano music, and used them for the 1908 ballet "Chopiniana," later produced as "Les Sylphides" by the Ballets Russes. Balanchine altered the music for various ballets, including Stravinsky's "Apollo," and worked with the arranger Hershy Kay to convert the music of John Philip Sousa and George Gershwin into versions that would sound right for the orchestra of New York City Ballet.

Over the past ten or fifteen years, however, we've noticed a decline of the arranger in ballet music. Looking at American Ballet Theatre's spring schedule at the Met, for example, one sees only a few arranged scores: "Les Sylphides," "Gaîté Parisienne," and the Celtic tunes, adapted, by several hands, for "The Informer." The rest of the scores are pretty much as the composers wrote them. Although fidelity to the concert form presents numerous pitfalls to the choreographer, from a musical point of view A.B.T.'s collection is sophisticated and varied, with important contributions by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, an impulsively danceable work by Stravinsky (for "Stravinsky Violin Concerto"), songs by Jerome Kern, and recent compositions by John Cage, Philip Glass, and Terry Riley. Twyla Tharp's intransigent masterpiece, "The Fugue," has its three dancers perform in "silence"—on a miked stage with the performers' footfalls providing their own score.

New York City Ballet—May 9 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "Black & White," and "Brahms/Schoenberg Quartet." . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: "Firebird," "Valse Triste," "Rhapsody in Blue," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ May 11-12 at 8: "Episodes," "A Fool for You," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ May 13 at 2: "Ballo della Regina," "Danses Concertantes," and "Episodes." . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: "Black & White," "Valse Triste," "Rhapsody in Blue," and "Brahms/



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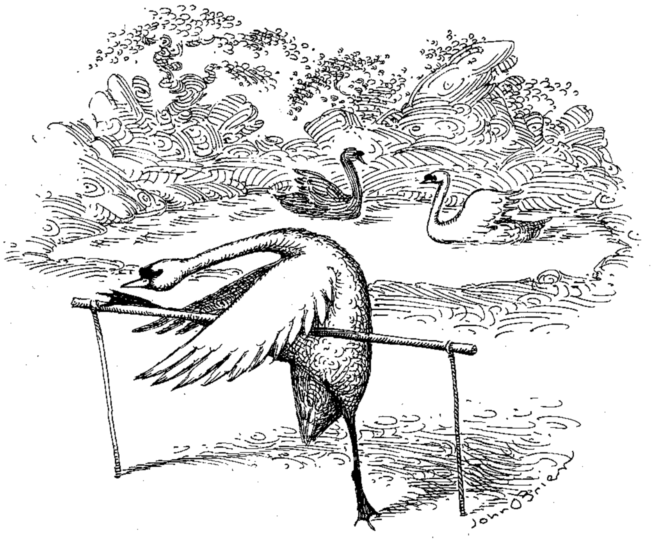
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



Schoenberg Quartet." . . . ¶ May 14 at 1: "Ballo della Regina," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ May 14 at 7: "Danses Concertantes," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Brahms/Schoenberg Quartet." . . . ¶ May 16 at 8: "Interplay," "Danses Concertantes," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ May 17 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)

American Ballet Theatre—Opening performances of the season. May 8 at 7; May 9 at 8; and May 10 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and "Gaîté Parisienne." . . . ¶ May 12 at 8: "Les Sylphides," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and "Ballet Imperial." . . . ¶ May 13 at 2: "Les Sylphides," "Airs," and "Ballet Imperial." . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: "Les Sylphides," "Prodigal Son," and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ May 15 at 8: "Les Sylphides," "Prodigal Son," and "Bourrée Fantasque." . . . ¶ May 16 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Some Assembly Required" (New York première), "The Informer," and "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1." . . . ¶ May 17 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "Airs," and "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1." . . . ¶ May 17 at 8: "Ballet Imperial," "The Informer," and "Gaîté Parisienne." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 1.)

Dan Wagoner and Dancers—A one-week engagement. May 9 at 7:30; May 11 and May 13 at 8; and May 14 at 2: " 'Round This World, Baby Mine," "To Comfort Ghosts," and the première of "Fata Morgana (Ritual for George)." . . . ¶ May 10: " 'Round This World, Baby Mine," "To Comfort Ghosts," and the première of "Pemaquid." . . . ¶ May 12 at 8 and May 14 at 7:30: "Pemaquid," "Fata Morgana (Ritual for George)," and "To Comfort Ghosts." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.) . . . **NOTE:** A question-and-answer session with Mr. Wagoner will follow the May 12 performance.

Africa Oyé!—A revue of music and dance from central and western Africa, with, among others, the Soothsayer Dancers and the vocalist Papa Wemba. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. May 9 at 7:30; May 10-12 at 8; May 13 at 2 and 8; May 14 at 3 and 7:30; and May 16-17 at 8. Through May 28.)

"Eyes Wide Open"—A screening of dance and performance videos by Deborah Gladstein and Sam Kanter, Henry Hills, Harmony Vanover, and others. A short discussion with the filmmakers will follow. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 8 at 8.)

Eric Barsness and Dancers—Presenting "Farsund Fjord" and other works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 9 and 16 at 8.)

Susan Rethorst—With Vicky Shick, Irene Hultman, and four other dancers in a program entitled "Beau Regard." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 11-13 at 8, May 14 at 3, and May 15 at 8.)

Sachiyo Ito and Company—In "Chieko: Genso," "At Our Noodle Shop," and other works. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. May 12-13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 877-3399.)

Daniel Maloney—With his ten-member company, Dance Probe, in "Gatherings II," "Portals," "Vox Suite," and "Countdown to a Breakout." Percussionist Horacee Arnold will accompany the dancers in "Gatherings II." (Nikolais/Louis Choreospace, 38 E. 19th St. May 12-13 at 8, and May 14 at 3. For reservations, call 982-2054.)

Doug Varone and Dancers—In "Home," "Taken Pieces," "Ever Faithful," and other works. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6105. May 13-14 at 8.)

"Choreographic Mentors Series"—May 13 at 8: Margaret Beals, Aileen Passloff, and Albert Reid. . . . ¶ May 14 at 3: June Finch, Phoebe Neville, and Gus Solomons, Jr. (Gowanus Arts Exchange, 295 Douglass St., Brooklyn. 1-718 596-5250.)

Benefit Dance Program—With Carmen de Lavallade, Christopher d'Amboise, Heather Watts, and Jock Soto. (Apple Corps Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 929-2955. May 15 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

On most nights, McCarthy's, on 14th Street west of Seventh Avenue, is a combination Irish pub and makeshift men's shelter, a place whose bleakness looks almost intentional—like a set for a "Twilight Zone" episode about the lower depths. A few old guys sit at the bar in front, beneath buzzing fluorescent lights, ignoring the TV, ignoring each other. In the back you can see feet sticking out of dilapidated booths.

But every few weeks, usually on a Saturday night, McCarthy's is transformed. Bands set up in the back room, the lights are dimmed, drink prices climb, and the walls are brightened, if that's the right word, by fifties pinup-girl posters. Around ten, people start trickling in, and by midnight the place is packed with a mixture of rock archetypes: fifties-style greasers, second-generation flower children, young men with mop tops and paisley vests, pale girls with leather jackets and jet-black hair. On these nights, McCarthy's is known as the Strip, a creation of the promoters Deb Parker and Gary Balaban, who put together shows here that feature bands partial to rockabilly and surf and mod and psychedelic rock. As more and more small clubs are squeezed out of business, the Strip, now in its third year, has become one of the few lasting meeting places of the sixties-nostalgia crowd and its related musical sects. The next show at this "wild watering hole," as Ms. Parker describes it, is May 13, and the featured band is the Talismen, a fast and loose garage-rock quartet from Portland, Maine.

The regulars show up on Strip nights, too. They do boozy dances, tell war stories, hustle drinks, flatten people with their breath. The Strip isn't a comfortable place to hear music—the air is hot and stale, and to get a seat you may have to kick someone out of bed—but people don't seem to mind. At this party, sleaziness is half the point.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **CHRISTOPHER MASON,** who fancies himself a New Age Noël Coward and who is currently tickling high-society funny bones in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Thursdays and nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **KAREN AKERS,** a willowy balladeer who moves from song to chanson to lied, commands the airwaves May 9-11 at nine and May 12-13 at nine and eleven. Her successor is **EARTHA KITT,** the purr-and-growler who was once sent up in a Monty Python skit (she was chased through Moscow by a mob of Russian officers). She'll be here for three weeks beginning May 16.

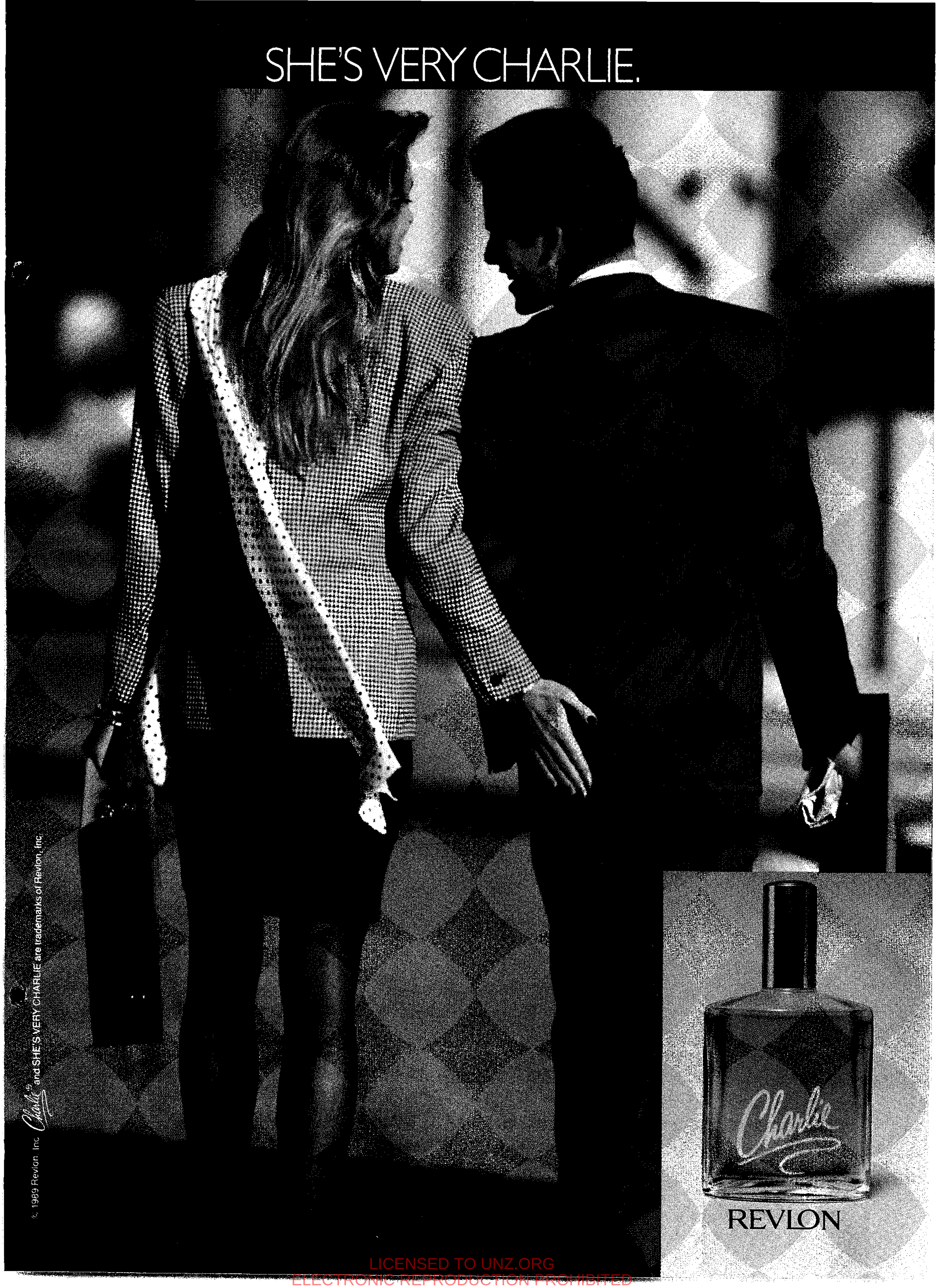
Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Those who are apt to cry "Gentrification!" at the sight of pastel walls, potted greenery, and a bar crowded with Frascati sippers will find something to complain about here. Even the sniffy, however, may agree that the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine viewing of the avenue outside. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. **SARAH VAUGHAN,** whose huge four-octave voice might send the silverware flying, will be here May 9-14. Trombonist **STEVE TURRE** and his outfit horn in on May 15. And starting May 16 you'll find **DIZZY GILLESPIE** making like a blowfish. Somebody sat on his trumpet in 1953, and he's been playing with a bent bell ever since. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, rock-and-roll fundamentalists, Village bopcats, and followers of rock-and-roll grandpop (he wrote "Blue Suede Shoes") **CARL PERKINS,** who's here on May 9. The seventies boogie kings **TOWER OF POWER** uphold the honorable tradition of "getting down" May 11-14. And on May 16, the big-label **REIVERS,** formerly the small-label Zeitgeist, offer some friendly guitar pop. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and (a new wrinkle) drummers compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. Through May 13, pianist **MIKE LONGO** pairs up with bassist **LONNIE PLAXICO; WALTER DAVIS, JR.,** goes to the bench on May 14; and starting May 15, pianist **KENNY BARRON** performs with bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO.** First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Pretty much everything about this jazz room is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the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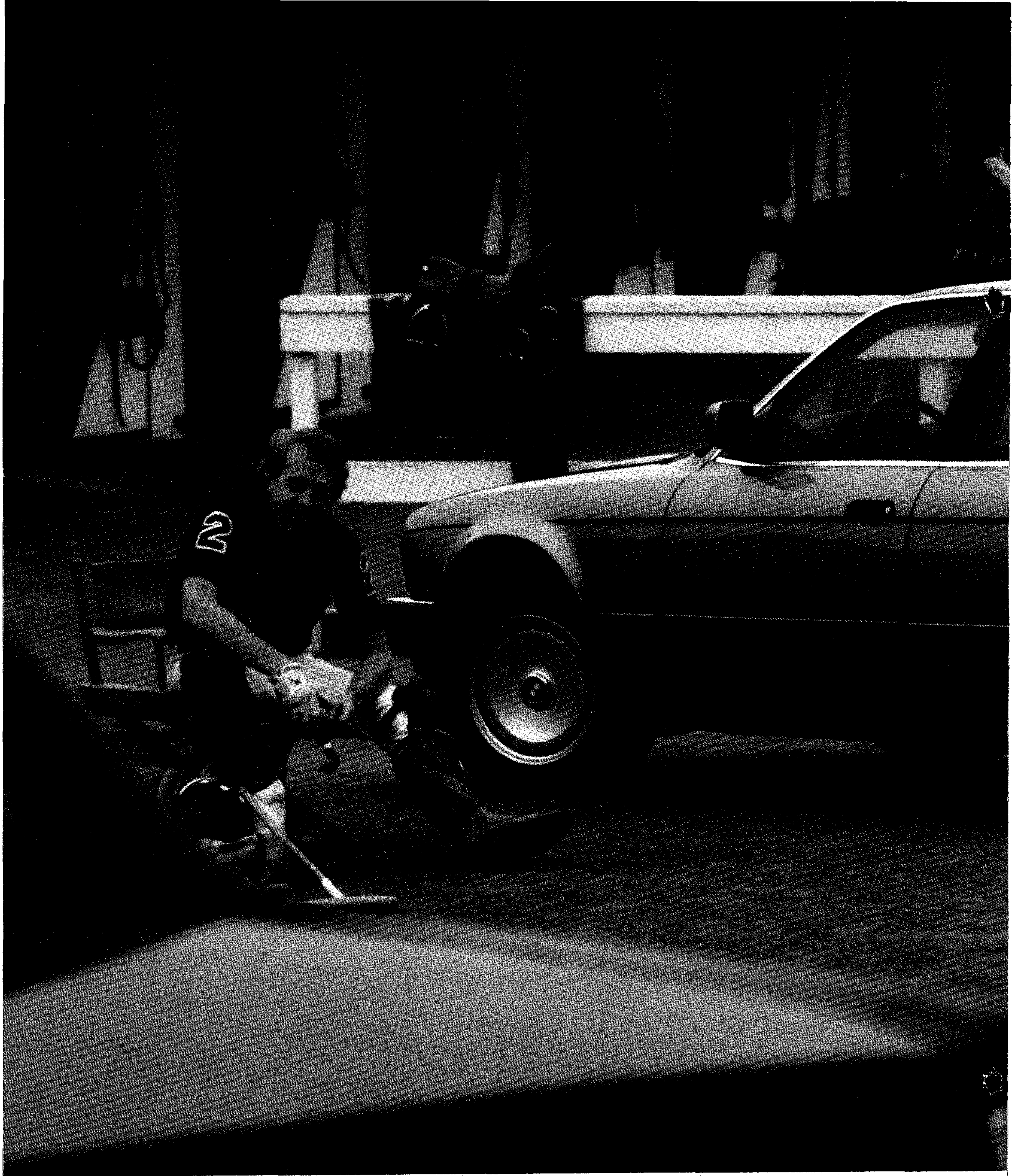

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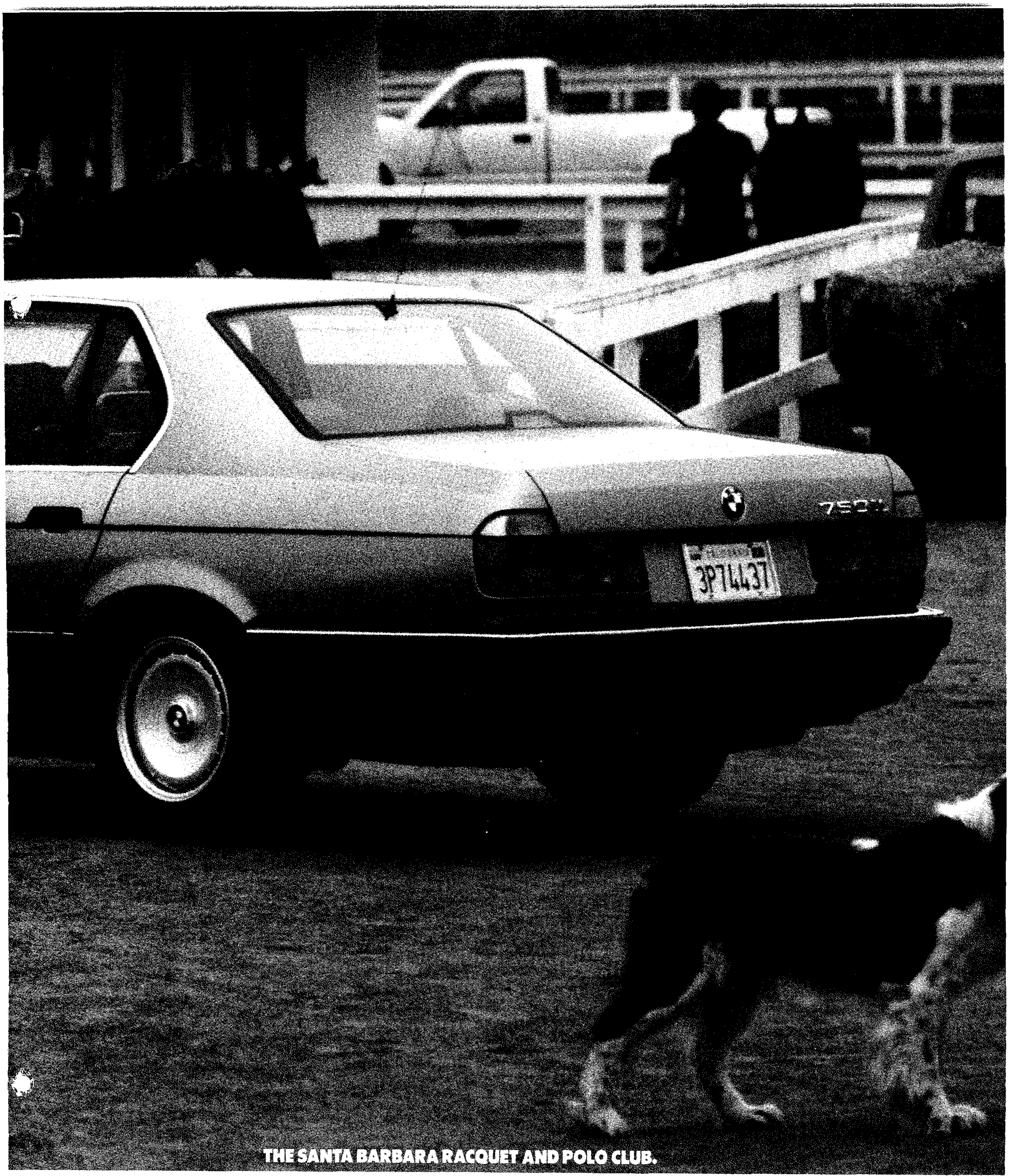

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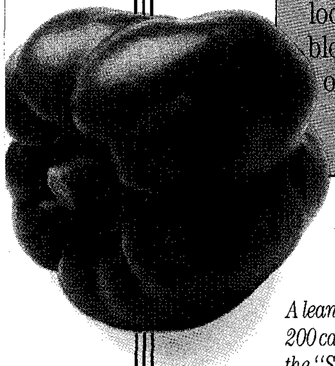
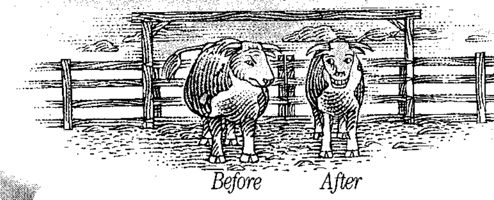
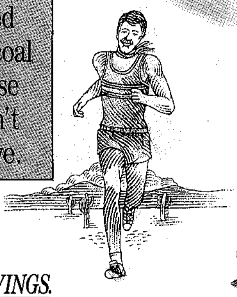
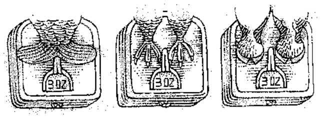




MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH.
We haven't exactly been staring at the sagebrush while the rest of the world ran to aerobics class. Leaner breeding, skinnier feeding and closer trimming are making things definitely okay at the corral.



OF CALORIES AND CRAVINGS.
A lean, trimmed 3-ounce serving of beef averages just 200 calories. Some cuts have even fewer. Just check out the "Skinniest Six" below.



MODERATION IN ALL THINGS.
Beef, chicken or fish, the suggested serving size is 3-ounces, cooked. Raw, just think of a quarter pound of lean beef per person. Then think teriyaki, fajitas, kabobs, satays....

SKINNY BEEF SALAD.
For a salad you won't wish was something else, toss in a few strips of tender sirloin along with the green stuff. P.S. It also works with leftovers.

*Figures are for 3-ounce servings, cooked and trimmed.**

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TOP LOIN
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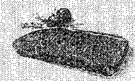

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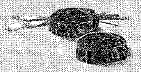

TENDERLOIN
7.9 gms total fat*
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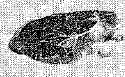
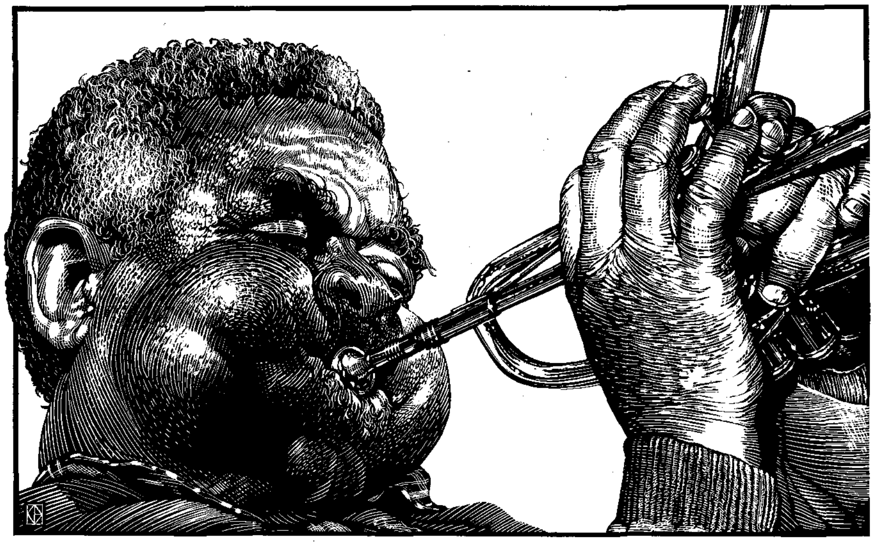
174 calories



SIRLOIN
7.4 gms total fat*
(3.0 gms sat. fat)
177 calories

view out the window of Vaux & Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. Sax player and "Gingerbread Boy" auteur **JIMMY HEATH** is top dog May 9-14 (with a quintet). Jean DuShon works out her blue-tinged vocal cords on Mondays. Music from nine-thirty.



Dizzy Gillespie at the Blue Note

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—A couple of years ago, after one of his performances at Alice Tully Hall, somebody asked **BOBBY SHORT** why the crowd seemed a little cold and he replied, "Sober, honey." Visitors to the Carlyle are once again under the pianist's influence. Sets at ten and midnight Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, you'll find **BARBARA CARROLL,** a pianist who made it known in the fifties that she didn't want to be referred to as bebop and who's been called it ever since. Shows at nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. Feet jitter, skirts twirl, and smiles break out everywhere. The New York Swing Dance Society organizes these gatherings, and on May 14 it brings in **VINCE GIORDANO** and his tuxedoed Nighthawks, who play breakneck stomps and Hoagy Carmichael tunes and Fletcher Henderson's "Beep." Giordano, who commutes from the doghouse to the crooner's mike, has taken pains to re-create the look and sound of a thirties combo, with period instruments, and arrangements taken, he says, note for note from the original scores. Music from eight.

DAN LYNCH, 221 Second ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with an Aretha poster and remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte.* The Ralph Moore quartet performs May 9-11; May 12-14 belongs to **MORGANA KING,** a singer-actress with swing and "The Godfather" on her résumé. Mondays are set aside for guitarist **LES PAUL.**

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—The kind of classy place where no sooner do they give you a plate than they take it away. Fortune Garden is decorated for a greenhouse effect and the priorities here are Chinese food, hanging plants, and jazz, in that order. On May 8, the piano will be in the hands of **JILL MC MANUS,** who'll team up with bassist Scott Lee. Pianist **ADAM MAKOWICZ** will be here with guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** May 9-14. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—A room where the tenth letter of the alphabet (uncapped and disguised as a quarter note) turns up often: on doors, window shades, matchbooks. It's also a room with a view (of Broadway) and with jazz (mostly of the mainstream type). Guitarist **JOHN PIZZARELLI,** seed of Bucky, leads a trio on May 11, and ivory tickler **DICK HYMAN** claims Mondays. Other talent: guitarist **MARTY GROSZ'S** quartet on May 9; pianist **MIKE LE DONNE'S** trio on May 10; and foursomes led by blues singer Gwen Cleveland (May 12), clarinettist **KEN PEPLOWSKI** (May 13), and violinist **ANDY STEIN** (May 17). Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. **PHOEBE LEGÈRE,** whose assorted talents (she plays piano and accordion, has a voice of impressive size, and does campy variations on a red-hot-mama theme) have made her a favorite in both downtown and uptown spas, will be on view May 14. Five Play, an a-cappella group, works on May 15, and pianist **PETER MALINVERNI** and bassist Pete O'Leary begin a five-nighter on May 16. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This upstairs music and performance space, reached by passing through a swinging bohemian restaurant, opened its doors in 1986 and quickly established itself as the headquarters of the downtown avant-garde music scene. (There wasn't much competition.) In the rear there's a mini-bar stocked with herbal tea and imported beer; up front is a small stage, occupied May 13-14 by guitarist, singer, and ex-Box Top (he sang "The Letter," in 1968) **ALEX CHILTON.** Chilton writes cool, ironic pop songs, and his band—this time out, a quintet—has a hard, spare sound. Music after nine.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the "Hoboken sound" and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a boost. **ALEX CHILTON** takes the stage on May 11; the Athens, Georgia, group **PYLON,** R.E.M.'s fellow-townsmen and musical soul mates, play on May 14.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. The **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET,** a sax-heavy outfit that performs an amalgam of swing, R. & B., and bebop, will perform on May 8 and May 15. Pianist **DON GROLNICK** will bring in his band May 9-11. May 12-13, **ART BLAKEY,** a drummer who's done his bit for jazz in general and the high hat in particular, comes in with his **JAZZ MESSENGERS** in tow. Music from about ten until two. Dining.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—The kind of murky, vinyl-and-mirrors lounge one might find in a sunken ocean liner. Onstage, performers pick, strum, and fiddle, and get worked up about long-gone friends and life on the run. If they're nervous, the master of ceremonies—a bearded guy in a red sweatshirt who sits at the back of the room—will say things like "You're doing fine" and "*Rock* it." The folkies will flood in May 12-13 for a benefit; among them will be **DAVID MASSENGILL, DAVE VAN RONK,** and **JOHN HARDY.** Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. May 9-14, the **NAT ADDERLEY** sextet performs, with, among others, **SONNY FORTUNE** on sax, **WALTER BOOKER** on bass, and **JIMMY COBB** on drums. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** takes over May 16. Shows from ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—A thirty-three-year-old three-ring circus. The ringmaster, a bearded gentleman named Art D'Lugoff, sometimes employs a barker to steer traffic to his multiple entertainments. In the basement, on Mondays after nine, salsa bands play for dancing and listening. Chicago-blues pianist **PINETOP PERKINS,** who says of his singing, "I holler every once in a while," steps in May 12-13. Back upstairs, in the Terrace Bar, piano-bass teams brave the gabbing nightly except Mondays. On Tuesdays, the visiting duo trades sets with **HELLMAN'S ANGELS,** a string trio whose head angel, **DAPHNE HELLMAN,** plays the harp. Music from ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **MINGUS DYNASTY BAND,** whose namesake, Charles Mingus, once K.O.'d a light fixture in this basement jazz Mecca while trying to reason with the proprietor, descends the stairs May 9-14. Trumpeter **RED RODNEY** and his quintet get started on May 16.

ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly, and the palm trees rustle tropically, and a waiter, delivering a plate of fried chicken and maple-pear corn bread to a customer, sings "It's suppertime" (to the tune of "Summertime"). The professional musicians tend to come on at around nine. May 9 and 10 belong to **JUNIOR MANCE,** a bop pianist who had a stint way back when as Dinah Washington's accompanist. On May 16, pianist **ANDY LAVERNE** will perform, and on May 17 guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** comes in.

5-10-5

If your green thumb looks like a blanched asparagus these days, you can start restoring its color by attending the annual spring sale at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Whether you work out of a pot or a back-yard plot, the two-day rain-or-shine outdoor market offers appropriate annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, and vegetables. Insiders report big interest in perennials, and those will be in abundance, but an old favorite, the African violet, remains so popular that the sale will include six hundred of the plants in four-and-a-half-inch pots and nearly two hundred and fifty more in pots that are thumb-size. Bonsais (*grown at the Botanic Garden*) *and topiaries* (*whose care and feeding will be demonstrated by their creator, Deborah Reich*) *will also be on display. Three hundred volunteers will preside over the transactions.* (*May 10 from 10 to 7, and May 11 from 10 to 3.*)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

IF you are in Studio 8-H during the broadcasting of "Saturday Night Live" and are not onstage, behind a camera, moving a flat, or ushering an actor on or off a set, you are in the way and should find yourself a seat where you aren't an obstacle to anyone. One of the alternatives is to climb up to the bleachers and join the studio audience.

Witnessing live television is not exactly like going to the theatre, where as a member of the audience you feel important, because your attention is all that counts. "S.N.L." 's actors first see sort-of-final scripts on Thursday, with revisions often slipped in minutes before airtime. Many sets are built in a day and a half, and some are still being painted moments before one of the cast members bellows "Live from New York! It's Saturday Night!" True, that battle cry does bring the studio audience into focus—for a moment—because the sign blinking "APPLAUSE" cues them it's their turn to perform. But during the show's ninety-minute no-take-two duration that sign will be their primary link to the performers, who are too preoccupied—reading cue cards, pacing punch lines, jeteing over a snakepit of cables, checking their makeup in someone's aviator glasses, racing to the flats that pop up all over the stage and obscure the audience's view from time to time—to acknowledge the live respondents. For though it is their laughter that the actors hear, "S.N.L." 's target audience is not the few hundred close at hand but the unseen millions who are looking for a late-night laugh in front of their home-entertainment systems. Maybe that's why most of the studio audience, after waiting eagerly for tickets in the Rockefeller Center lobby, are also watching "Saturday Night Live" (Live! From New York!) on the studio television monitors.

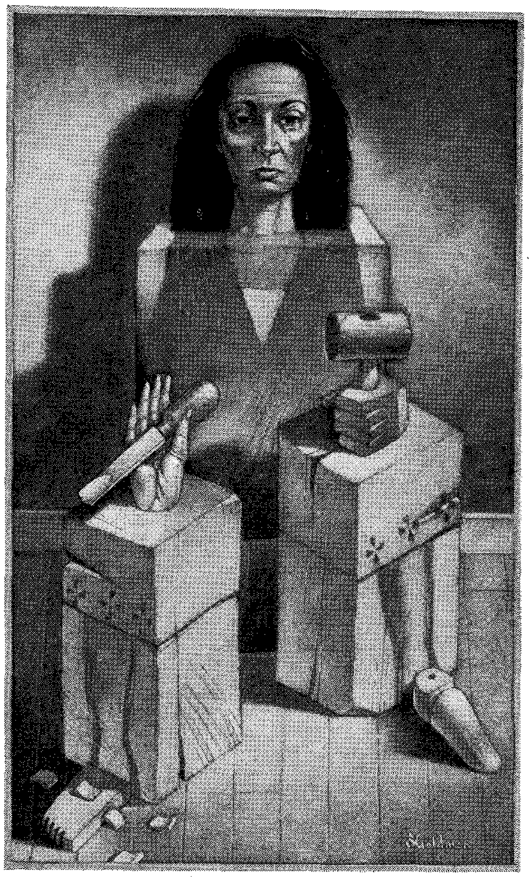
IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Frank Maya—In new comic rants and monologues. With music. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. May 11-14 at 8:30.)

Richard Elovich—His new work, "If Men Could Talk, the Stories They Could Tell," is about communication problems. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671. May 11-13 at 8:30.)

Veselka Festival at P.S. 122—A meeting of the minds of the performance and the pierogi people. *May 8 and May 10 at 9: Films.* . . . ¶ May 11-14 at 8: Laurie Carlos. . . . ¶ May 11-14 at 9: Peggy Pettitt and Louise Smith. . . . ¶ May 11-14 at 10: Ishmael Houston-Jones. . . . ¶ May 12-13 at 11, and May 14 at 4: Michael Peppe. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

La Mama—May 10-14 at 7:30: "Quasi-Kinetics," the Otrabanda company's latest work. . . . ¶ May 11-13 at 10: Alien Comic, a former-playwright performance artist. . . . ¶ May 15 at 9: Carmelita Tropicana, with Natasha Shulman. (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)



Marisol

ART

THE current Whitney Biennial is a cool glass of water. You will see very little color, taste no strong flavors, and sense no blasts of passion—political or sexual—in the series of underpopulated galleries that contain the exhibition. Not since the early seventies has contemporary American art looked so withdrawn. In fact, conceptual art turns up everywhere in various mutations. What would you call "Dark on That Whiteness"—a wall piece by Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler consisting of shelved and labelled jars of latex house paint in fashionable, neutral hues—if not conceptual art, here rematerialized for the house-proud late eighties? What is Meg Webster's "Lifted Wetland"—a huge slice of plant-sprouting, Hudson River-watered turf—if not an ecologically updated earthwork?

Nostalgia for nature and estrangement from childhood are the thematic undercurrents of this Biennial. April Gornik, Mark Innerst, and Joan Nelson all make eerily traditionalist and melancholic landscapes that remind you of early photography—a welcome thought, since this Biennial contains virtually no photographs. Many paintings on view—by Donald Baechler, Ross Bleckner, Mary Heilmann, Brice Marden, and William Wegman—have surfaces that are riddled with scumbles, erasures, blurs, shadows, pentimenti, and other visual metaphors for hesitation and anxious restraint. Proustian remembrances, ever so slightly distorted, of furniture and domestic interiors characterize the work of Robert Gober, Saint Clair Cemin, and Michele Zalopany. And the wilder objects in this exhibition, such as Jeff Koons' notorious mega-figurines and Mike Kelley's "Plush Kundalini and Chakra Set"—an outrageous hanging soft sculpture of stuffed toys sewn together—project an aura of odd, intelligent little boys playing in the corners of their rooms.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment," a show of more than a hundred of Francisco Goya's paintings, drawings, and prints. Through July 16. . . . ¶ The roof garden has opened for the season. . . . ¶ "American Porcelain: 1770-1920." Through June 25. . . . ¶ Fifty Ming and Ch'ing dynasty (fifteenth through seventeenth century) paintings from the museum's collection. Through Aug. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Minor White: The Eye That Shapes." Through June 18. . . . ¶ The sculptor Scott Burton's installation of Brancusis from the permanent collection. Through May 31. . . . ¶ "America Worked: The 1950's Photographs of Dan Weiner." Through July 11. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum reopens May 13, with a show of the Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer's paintings and works on paper. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Biennial. Through July 9. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Sculptures by four American post-minimalists: Joel Fisher, Mel Kendrick, Robert Lobe, and John Newman. Through May 15. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Jewelry, artifacts, fabrics, baskets, and some reconstructed dwellings from the often overlooked island of Madagascar. Through Aug. 27. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"George Nakashima: Full Circle" is a show of furniture by a craftsman who favors an organic approach to tables, chairs, cabinets, and lamps. Through Aug. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Highlights from the Zurich banker Pierre Uldry's collection of Chinese cloisonné. Through May 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Traditions and Transformations: Contemporary Afro-American Sculpture" attempts to demonstrate the vitality of black artists working within the mainstream. Martin Puryear is not shown to best advantage, but Maren Hassinger, Alison Saar, and Melvin Edwards are well represented. Through May 27. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Two hundred years' worth of French design, in honor of the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Through July 16. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A small sam-

In just one lathering, this man will like mirrors better.

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Now, mirrors are more reassuring. They don't spoil your image as soon as your back is turned.

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pling of views of Venice and Paris by Francesco Guardi (paintings), Charles Meryon (prints), and James A. M. Whistler (pastels and prints). Guardi may have looked closely at Venice's canals, but Whistler makes you want to travel down them. Through June 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—Paintings, drawings, and sculptures by eighteen Israeli artists, responding to their country's political and social conflicts of the past decade. Starts May 10. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Words of Blood, Images of Fire," another tribute to the bicentennial of the French Revolution, includes Robespierre's holograph of a speech Saint-Just gave attacking Danton; a sketch (attributed to David) of Robespierre on the day of his execution; and letters, more speeches, and memoranda. Starts May 12. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 2 Lincoln Square (entrance on Columbus Ave. between 65th and 66th Sts.)—Inaugurating the new exhibition space is a show of paintings, sculptures, furniture, and textile and decorative works from the permanent collection. Through July 16. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Calvert Vaux, Architect and Planner" salutes (with photographs and drawings) the nineteenth-century designer, whose career was distinguished by, among other things, his collaboration with Frederick Law Olmsted on Central Park and Prospect Park. Through Aug. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library at Lincoln Center—A fine overview of the evolution of Baroque string instruments, represented by members of the violin family from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries; X-rays showing the intricate construction of some of the instruments; and a video with an elaborate sound system, featuring performances on viola da gamba, viola d'amore, and English violet. Through June 10. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, 10 to 8; Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Wednesdays and Fridays, noon to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Art as a Verb: The Evolving Continuum" is a show of works by thirteen contemporary African-American artists mainly interested in video, performance, and installation. Among the artists are Faith Ringgold, Adrian Piper, and Howardena Pindell. Through June 18. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Varujan Boghosian—Accomplished, sentimental constructions and collages. Through May 20. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 417 E. 75th St.)

Walter De Maria—Two shows. At Gagosian (980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.), "13, 14, 15 Sided Open Polygons" (1984), in stainless steel, each with a movable ball. Through May 27. . . . ¶ At 65 Thompson Street, in SoHo, "13, 14, 15 Meter Rows" (1985), also in stainless steel, composed of forty-two pieces, each a metre in length. These installations are impeccable, and De Maria's obsessive measuring prompts one, in one's mind's eye, to project the standard units out into left field, into orbit, or down to the core of the earth. Through May 13.

Robert Motherwell—One of the few survivors from among the original Abstract Expressionists, Motherwell is still painting within the narrow range of imagery that brought him fame. By now the works look like tired versions of the same old thing, in black and yellow. Through May 25. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

C. C. Wang—Chinese landscape scrolls, in the traditional style but with an awareness of Post-Impressionist painting, are displayed here, along with antique brush pots, brush washers, armrests, bronze weights, and other scholar's implements. Through May 27. (China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. Open Mondays.)

Group Shows—At **Hirschl & Adler,** 21 E. 70th St.: "Uncommon Spirit" traces the development of American sculpture through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The folk tradition is represented by some fine weathervanes and whirligigs; the neoclassical by a lot of silly bronzes of winged nudes and frolicking women (with the exception of the work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens); and the modern (much of it inspired, in part, by folk) by the delightful, ever-fresh work of Elie Nadelman, John Storrs, Paul Manship, and William Zorach. Through June 9. . . . **Coe Kerr,** 49 E. 82nd St.: A charming Matisse portrait of a woman seated among the floral arabesques that decorate her room; a wonderful small Picasso synthetic-Cubist canvas of 1914, of a glass and playing cards in shades of bottle green; and a watercolor sketch of a Tahitian woman by Gauguin, which evokes in just a few strokes the master's great paintings of the same subject, are among the exquisite European paintings and sculptures, from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the Askin Collection. Through May 17. (Open Mondays.) . . . **Mathes,** 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.: In "Bohemian Night Life: 1910-1935," the dark and sinister Berlin night favored by the German Expressionists is glossed over in favor of the sweaty, sassy, and ever-populist American burlesque of same. Included are an early Stuart Davis painting of a buxom dance-hall singer depicted in Ashcan style; a racist drawing of black tap dancers by Miguel Covarrubias, the Mexican illustrator for *Vanity Fair;* and a fine Reginald Marsh watercolor of some hip-shaking women, which drips with sex. Through June 1. . . . **Vanderwoude Tananbaum,** 24 E. 81st St.: "Abstract Expressions" is a fine display of a few sculptures and a dozen abstract paintings made primarily in New York in the fifties and early sixties by accomplished artists, mostly of the second tier. Alfred Leslie's, Conrad Marca-Relli's, and Theodoros Stamos's paintings bear witness to the winding down of expressionistic abstraction. Through May 31.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Short List—**Giorgio Cavallon,** McCoy, 19 E. 71st St. (through June 1); **Nick Ghiz,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. (through June 3); **Henry Moore,** Weintraub, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (through May 27); **Odd Nerdrum,** Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St. (through June 9).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Giovanni Anselmo—This new installation of work by perhaps the most sparely elegant and sphinxlike of the artists associated with the Arte Povera movement includes seven "paintings," each composed of a big, sumptuous, different-colored slab of granite winched onto a canvas support. Also, a slide projector that projects the word "*particolare*" ("detail") onto the viewer, in small letters, at roughly breast level. Through May 13. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.)

SKY HIGHWAY

On West 11th Street, a block and a half from the river, there's a garage with an electric sign hanging outside—it is a rectangle of orange with a strip of blue at the bottom underlining the word "PARK." Sometimes when you're walking toward the river to catch the light in the minutes just after sunset, the sign's colors exactly match the sky's. A strip of orange still burns at the horizon, and the blue of the heavens sweeps back overhead, turning deeper as the day turns to the night that has already fallen in the city behind you. The effect is so gorgeous you nearly hate it for being so fleeting. You want to tell the earth, Stop. Hold it. Back up. Pull in here. We've even got a place for you to park.

Norman Bluhm—Happy powder-puff paintings of billowy post-Matissean forms, in high-fashion purples, pinks, lavenders, oranges, yellows, and flesh tones. Through May 20. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

Alice Dalton Brown / Barbara Dixon Drewa—Well-rendered Precisionist paintings of the glittery early-morning sun as it illuminates lush tropical plants, viewed from Key West porches or from the sides of houses. / Common trompe-l'oeil paintings of type trays and bulletin boards displaying chess pieces, ribbons, dice, and matchbooks and playing cards printed with masterpieces and with images of Wonder Woman. Through May 20. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

John DeAndrea—Three new emotionally direct Photo-Realist figurative sculptures by the pensive person's Duane Hanson. In one, the artist stares forlornly at a plaster mask while a female model looks over his shoulder, in a composition borrowed from Courbet. It suggests contemporary art's predatory nature toward history. Through May 26. (Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St.)

Friedel Dzubas—Thirty-six small abstract studies on unstretched canvas, in box frames. Dzubas's modest daubs of color create great radiance and some amazingly specific dramatic effects. This show is intensely pleasurable. Through May 20. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Lucio Fontana (1899-1968)—While Jackson Pollock was busy liberating paint over here, Fontana was in Italy slashing his monochrome canvases. The results were often surprisingly poetic (and about as accidental as Arp's "chance" compositions), and here are some prime examples, gathered under the auspices of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, of Venice. Through June 16. (Rayburn Foundation, 41 E. 57th St.)

Paul Hunter—Small, vaporous encaustics—moodscape paintings, depicting what could be storm-tossed waters or ominously cloudy skies. Also, detailed bronzes of underwater vegetation, which are just stuff. Through May 20. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918)—A lot of pale pencil drawings; a few major paintings, including several pointillistic park scenes; and some fascinating extras, like Klimt's caftan. Through June 10. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Alice Neel (1900-84) and **Diane Arbus** (1923-71)—There's no sugar and not everything's nice in Neel's paintings and in Arbus's photographs of children, but spice there is, and even spite. This very strong show is as much a portrait of Neel and Arbus as it is of children. Through May 20. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Francis Picabia (1879-1953)—A fantastic and utterly disingenuous show of paintings from the twenties and early thirties: the long-spurned and now famous "Transparences." The filmy layers of superimposed imagery in these works—as well as the images themselves—may be the most widely and successfully imitated compositional device in art of the past decade. Seductive, sophisticated, sentimental, deranged—these paintings are altogether transcendent. Through June 3. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jean-Paul Riopelle—Striated-taffy Action paintings from the fifties by a Quebecois who spent time in Paris. Intended as a celebratory explosion, they are, instead, concise illustrations of the decline of heroic abstract painting. Through May 20. (Matisse, 41 E. 57th St.)

Richard Ryan—New paintings. This classicist's still-lifes and architectural études come in mustard- and ketchup-toned monochromes, are very tightly rendered, and are academic in the extreme. Through May 17. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

Carl Nicholas Titolo—"Jazbop: Visual Jazz" is one of those shows (Titolo's sixth here) full of all sorts of wonderful, ebullient, life-affirming artifacts that say only that the artist is one helluva creative, busy-busy guy. Through May 20. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Group Show—"The Case for Plywood" sounds like an interesting and timely subject—this material turns up in all sorts of work lately, in all sorts of new ways—but, though Christopher Lucas's wavy relief and John Torreano's facetted "Jewel" provide some convincing evidence, this show doesn't make the case for it at all. Through May 17. (Ross, 50 W. 57th St.)

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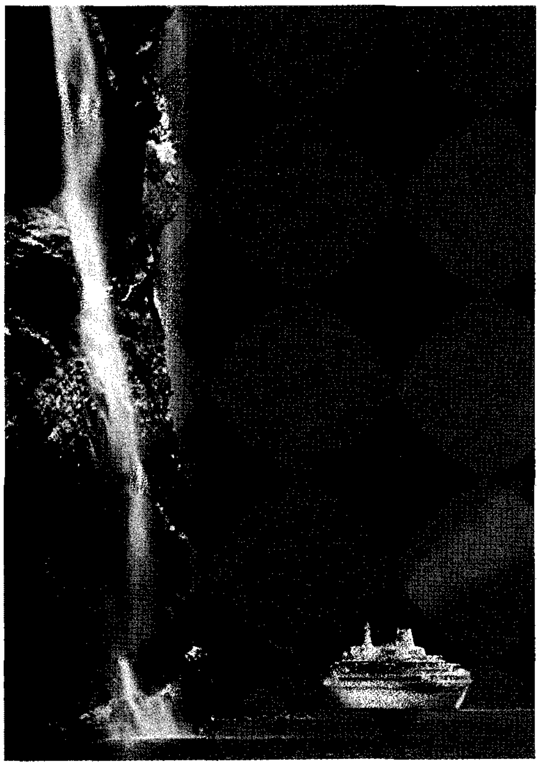
BRITTANY HAIFA LAHAINA WATERFORD BALI NICE SYDNEY TANGIER JUNEAU LENINGRAD FORT-DE-FRANCE SANTAREM CAPRI

SUNSHINE AT MIDNIGHT, ICE AGE WATER FOUNTAINS, AND A 28,000-TON NATIVE TO ESCORT YOU.

A WAVE OF TRANQUILITY SWEEPS OVER THE DECK AS THE ROYAL VIKING SKY SLOWLY ENTERS NORWAY'S GRANDEST INLET, GEIRANGERFJORD. ON THE PORT SIDE, A MAGNIFICENT WATERFALL tumbles down a mountain in mile-long sheets. Overhead, an energetic sun shares the sky with circling seagulls.



That nice steward from yesterday *(what was his name again?)* returns to the Promenade Deck with a bottle of the ship's private label aquavit. "The old Vikings," he offers, "believed that the best aquavit spent time at sea being caressed by the motion of the ship." And indeed, your aquavit has done just that, aboard a Royal Viking Line ship.

Your stateroom is not how you left it this morning. Instead, it's immaculate, the result of three careful checks. A vase of flourishing purple irises has been delivered, again. *(They smell purple.)*

At dinner, the sommelier suggests one of the ship's 18,000 bottles of wine. Then, somewhere near Sweden, a toast is made: to all the special moments that have led to this one right now.

In exchange for seeing the world, your Scandinavian stewardesses have mastered an instruction manual nearly four inches thick.

In Copenhagen, a postman glides by on a yellow bicycle, his bright red jacket catching the wind like a kite. *(Funny, Danish dogs bark at postmen, too.)*

From the dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral, Leningrad is so greatly revealed that security denies you even a single snapshot.

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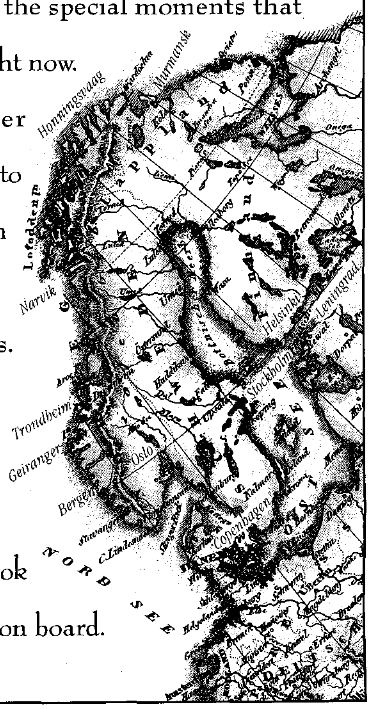
The summer months bring us home to Northern Europe on nine occasions.

For details, see your travel agent or call (800) 426-0821.

More than ever, we look forward to seeing you on board.



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LIVORNO PERTH MYKONOS KUALA LUMPUR NEW YORK OSLO PIRAEUS LONDON PAPEETE BORDEAUX BANGKOK QUEBEC BORA BORA BOMBAY SINGAPORE ROME SYRACUSE WHITTIER

ART—Cont'd

Short List—**COLLEEN BROWNING,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through May 20); **ALEXANDER CALDER,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 17); **DAVID DEUTSCH** and **WIN KNOWLTON,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 27); **JEAN DUBUFFET,** Herstand, 24 W. 57th St., open Mondays (through July 8); **PAOLO ICARO,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 3); **MARISOL,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St., open Mondays (through June 3); **IZHAR PATKIN,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St., open Mondays (through June 3); **PICASSO,** Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 30); **PETER SAUL,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 30); **JOHN TORREANO,** Shea & Beker, 20 W. 57th St., and Hanson, 415 West Broadway (through June 3).

GALLERIES—SoHo

John M. Armleder—Elegant new design-savvy objects by a popular Swiss artist, including four meticulous piles of folded wool blankets under two tacky chandeliers; three trombones of different metals on a well-padded high-style chaise; and some "paintings" (shiny fake-snakeskin fabrics on stretchers). Through June 3. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

Louise Bourgeois—The third show in a month of shows by this wonderful and perverse quick-change artist consists of many spindly wooden totems from the fifties. Bourgeois's approach to this august archetype suggests the kind of release that can be obtained in such activities as bead stringing, stack making, color coding, and spinning, when repetition turns into rhythm. Some fervently scratchy drawings from the same period are also on view. Through May 13. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Saint Clair Cemin—In one of these sculptures, a bronze biomorphic form, its feet attached to thin white metal sheets, floats in the air—a somewhat magical, thought-provoking work, in which the support and the supported become fused. Many of the other works are little more than highly aestheticized pedestal sculptures, decadent and glib. Through May 20. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

Peter Fischli and David Weiss—This deadpan comedy team from Switzerland made their international mark a couple of years ago with a brilliantly realized half-hour movie that had no actors, a Rube Goldberg plot, action à la Buster Keaton, and special effects out of Wagner via Hans-Jürgen Syberberg. The theme of this show is travel, and there are medium-sized, featureless plaster statues of prototypical stewardesses and cars, along with large Cibachrome clichés of airports, the Matterhorn, and the swans of the Limmat River, in the artists' native Zurich. Through May 20. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Viola Frey—A garish, arguably hilarious show of enormous painted ceramic figures—easily twice life-size—and some drawings. The Gargantuas sit, lounge, or hang around in groups, as if they were at a nudists' picnic. Many seem to have come from Red Grooms' universe, and some resemble Joan Crawford. Through May 31. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Antony Gormley—A sculptural installation of life-size cast-iron wrestlers and a crowd of miniature terra-cotta figures arranged in a huge sunburst. In the psychological containment this British sculptor portrays, he invites comparison to Giacometti. Through May 31. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Christian Haub—Strange, colorful geometric paintings, most of them on colored plastic. They are both ugly and compelling—synthetic Cubism meets Colorforms. Through May 20. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Inigo Jones (1573-1652)—An impeccable scholarly display of lovely ink drawings by the great Palladio-influenced Elizabethan architect. Through July 22. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

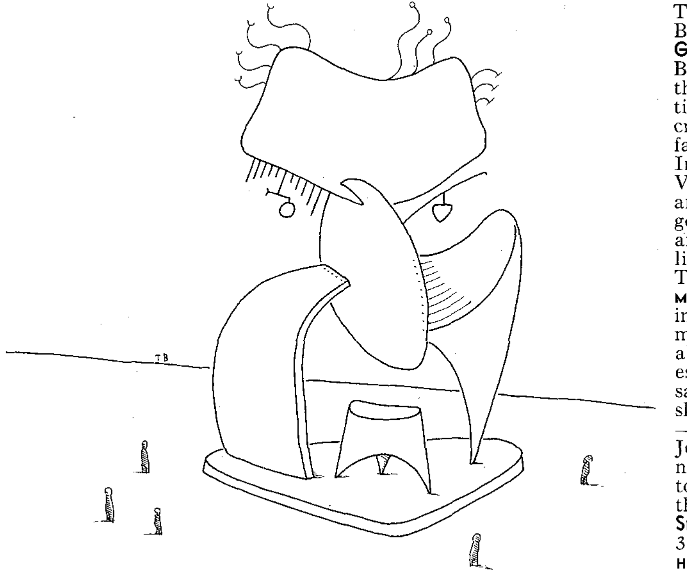
Kim Keever—Carved-paint pictures of flora and fauna which aspire to the passion and sorrow of Kiefer but are, frankly, horrible. A similarity in name does not a heavyweight make. Through May 20. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Mel Kendrick / Bruce Boice—Lively new wood sculptures, mostly from tree trunks that have been sliced, sawed, mangled, axed, jigged, and jagged—bark and all—and a huge sculpture whose carved circles and stripes have been touched with black. / Post-Cubist abstract paintings with chairs in them. Through May 20. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Richard Milani—Silk-screen paintings on fibreglass-and-plastic mesh, mostly of the kinds of lacy patterns found on decorative fabric, with the sleazy feel of a bordello. The clearly visible stretchers that support them emphasize somewhat tiresomely their identity as fabricated objects. Through May 20. (Rubin, 155 Spring St.)

Peter Nadin—In his best show yet, Nadin merges an enjoyment of painting with a suspicion of its illusionism in these views of the artist's studio, with its window open and art works scattered about. Nadin plays with the theme of creative frustration as strategically as if it were a good chess match. Through May 20. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Manuel Neri—Sculptures and works on paper. This artist's more or less life-size figures (some in marble, others out of plaster) are masterly and upsetting. It is as if their "flesh," suggested by the marble tints or by the pastel pigments, were eroding while the figures still seemed young—as if the life the works signify were nasty and eternal. Through May 27. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)



Alexander Calder

Gary Panter—Big, colorful paintings by the man who is largely responsible for the set of "Pee-wee's Playhouse." Panter has graduated to paintings of sinister cartoon visions—one-eyed monsters and unshaven bad boys—which look all too familiar. Through May 27. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, in a new location, at 532 Broadway.)

Hirsch Perlman and Charles Ray—Two artists who are in the Whitney Biennial. More of Perlman's truncated art works: photographs of Polaroid photographs of great modernist architectural works, this time the Johnson's Wax Building, by Frank Lloyd Wright, and Adolf Loos's Rufer's House. . . . ¶ At first, Ray's sculpture looks like a blank arrangement of utilitarian objects on a table—a plate, a cup, a pepper mill, a potted plant (fake)—but the hum of little motors tips you off: each of the objects is ever so slowly doing its own mechanical pirouette. Through May 27. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Ellen Phelan—New paintings of dreamily rendered verdure, in various green and non-green monochromes. All of these works refer to Romantic landscape painting and to the irrevocable intrusion of photography and contemporary edginess on that vision. Many of the paintings are amplified adaptations of the artist's better-known drawings; they do not suffer in translation. Through May 26. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

David Shapiro—Segmented paintings in which different abstract compositions appear on a single canvas—something striped, say, with something spotted. They follow in an increasingly watered-down tradition of American organic abstraction. Through May 18. (Dolan Maxwell, 154 Wooster St.)

Hunt Slonem—Brushy birds painted against geometric backgrounds with grids of bars streaked over them—something about paint and engagement. Many are in nifty old frames. Through May 20. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

Bill Sullivan—Realistic landscapes and cityscapes with a refreshing informality. The most compelling depict synthetic sunsets in cotton-candy colors that stir the memory. Through May 20. (Einstein, 591 Broadway.)

Donald Sultan—Crayon drawings—some dense and scumbly, others faint—by a prolific maker of overly elegant paintings and prints. These are poker hands, few of which—say, the one showing a pair of nines—are likely to win any jackpots. Through June 3. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

Yoshi Wada—A captivating, well-orchestrated sound sculpture involving a computer, an electronic keyboard, wires leading everywhere, a garbage can emitting electronic beeps, wall-mounted fire alarms, droning sirens, and two rickety rhythm instruments with hammers, one pounding an oil drum and the other a suspended steel sheet. Through May 13. (Harvey, 537 Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the **CUTLER,** 593 Broadway: "Risibility Askew" is the labored but not inappropriate title of this spacey show. A small, crooked smile may creep over your face at the sight of "The World International Centers," Jeffrey Vallance's painted map of Tonga and Iceland; Ted Abramczyk's big, goofy sculptures—of a bell, a boat, and a table with a cubistic mandolin—might raise an eyebrow. Through May 13. . . . **LORENCE-MONK,** 568 Broadway: These paintings, through closeup and enlargement, propose a new direction for abstraction. The show also proposes Julian Lethbridge—whose grisaille paintings resemble reptile-skin patterns and are very assured—as an heir-apparent to Jasper Johns. One small, elegant painting near the entrance, tighter and tougher than the rest, might fit that designation. Through May 26.

Short List—**NANCY CHUNN,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through June 3); **HEIDE FASNACHT,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through June 3); **LOTHAR FISCHER,** Haller, 415 West Broadway (through May 31); **SONIA GECHTOFF,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway, opens at noon on Saturdays (through May 30); **KEVIN LARMON,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through May 27); **CHRISTOPHER LUCAS,** Good, 532 Broadway (through May 13); **GERHARD MERZ,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through May 27); **MIMMO PALADINO,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through June 3); **EDWARD RUSCHA** and **CHARLES SIMONDS,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through May 27); **JOEL SHAPIRO,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St., (through June 3); **PHILIP TAAFFE** at Boone, 417 West Broadway, and at Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through May 27); **TOM WESSELMANN,** Davidson, 415 West Broadway (through June 10); **JOSEPH ZITO,** Esman, 70 Greene St. (through June 10).

OTHER GALLERIES

Dennis Adams—Illuminated transparencies and a maquette for a new project by one of our more provocative public artists. (Adams designs bus shelters, among other things). In a brutal attack on colonial arrogance, he would install in the pissoirs of Dijon floor-to-ceiling illuminated transparencies of the heads of French generals, recently detached from their statue-bodies, waiting to be evacuated from Algeria in 1962. (The proposal is still under consideration.) Through May 17. (Burgin, 270 Lafayette St.)

David Bowes—Recent paintings. Familiar icons of stately décor or theatrical artifice—Chinese Export teapots, eighteenth-century German figurines, pharaonic monuments, a clown—clash with disjunctive, stylized backgrounds. These works are daring, skillful, and bilious. Through May 20. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

Jenny Holzer—A new installation of electronic message boards and inscribed stone slabs. As decadent as Beardsley and as tortured as Poe, this has to be the most brilliant incarnation of contemporary fin-de-siècle aestheticism yet to appear. Through June 18. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

Christian Marclay—Everything in this mixed-media show has a whimsical but literal connection to sound. There is, for instance, a pillow made of crocheted Beatles tapes; two Plexiglas boxes with stereo-speaker bases; a set of altered comic-book pages whose exclamatory bubbles can be read as a score. Through May 27. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

Sylvia Martins / Vittorio Scarpati—Recent abstract paintings, in tan, buff, and burgundy tones, that are technically accomplished but academic and stiff; also, a couple of much better, jazzier, glittery sand drawings. / Scarpati's first solo exhibition consists of scores of small Rabelaisian notebook drawings in a speedy, cartoonlike style. A veritable lexicon of life's little moments, including many spent in hospital beds, where most of these funny, erotically charged, sweet-tempered vignettes were made. Through May 27. (56 Bleecker Street Gallery.)

Robin Winters—Just as art has become increasingly exalted and public, this mischievous artist is making works that are informal—almost incidental—and viewable only in a personal, ritualized way. The show consists of eleven small, finely crafted tables, each with a molded glass vase on top and engaging figurative drawings in its drawer. The artist will add to the drawers' contents each year for eleven years. Through May 20. (Klein, 611 Broadway.)

P.S. 1—Two major sculpture exhibitions. On the main exhibition floor is "The Drowned World," a suite of ten scherzi on the theme of the fountain. Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel are responsible for "Charybdis," the spectacular first sight of the show—an extraterrestrial tableau of fire, water, and sand, with dramatic elements, such as a slow-moving spiral and a whirring spindle, and a spotlight playing over all. (Someone really should get hold of this for the next "Ring" cycle.) Also quite grand are the lightly perspiring sculptures of Eric Orr. Not so grand but more poignant are Robin Winters' circular waterway and Rebecca Howland's "It's a Sick World." And there's more. . . . ¶ One floor up is a roomy, relaxed retrospective of work made since 1977 by Franz West, a liberated, puckish Austrian sculptor given to wordplay and subversive authority games (you're allowed to touch certain of his sculptures only if you're naked), with a very engaging sense of beauty which has to do with "giving form to neurotic symptoms." Through June 11. (46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

UNTIL a screenwriter comes along who can capture the way artists and photographers actually talk, movies about their lives ought to be silents. Kirk Douglas as van Gogh and Charles Laughton as Rembrandt were great, but some of their lines about art were ridiculous. Now, in the age of celebrity artists and biodramas, the clichés about the art world are coming as fast as Rocky's punches were a few seasons ago. Photographers—probably because their work doesn't have that million-dollar mystique—have been more protected from cinematic extravaganzas than painters, but there have been some doozies about them, too, most recently the made-for-TV movie "Margaret Bourke-White." This dud, with its hokey lines about Bourke-White's will to take pictures, makes a strong argument against talkies.

The look of the movie alone—especially the juxtaposition of poverty and glamour—is perturbing. Farrah Fawcett's major expression of Bourke-White's bravado (aside from standing on a lot of precipices and popping in on wars) is the pet snake draped around her neck boa style as she dictates a telegram to her soon-to-be-boyfriend Erskine (Skinny) Caldwell. What struck us as we thought about Bourke-White's daring and her enormous output of photographs was that although she wore the reptile, as far as we know she did not photograph it. We were thinking about this later—about how we've seen plenty of snakes in nature photography and in travel magazines (and in movies, for that matter) but hardly ever in serious photography exhibitions or books—when we happened to be in a cab going up Central Park West and saw a man entering the Park with a snake around his neck. The cabdriver was as horrified as we were. We told him about Margaret Bourke-White and her unphotographed snake, and he said, "I can't speak for her, but I'm sure anything that crawls is not a good subject. A snake is not what you want to photograph. They've got nothing to photograph, just a wobbly body. All a snake is is sneaky. You're better off photographing anything with legs. Even a roach is better—it's got legs." With guys like him around, maybe there's hope for dialogue and photography.

Dike Blair—Large grainy color photographs of an industrial plant or a suburban street viewed through a car windshield, with occasional references to the artmaking process—a few drips of paint, some painted circles of light. Most of the scenes are dusky, spotlit, or shrouded in a green haze. About half are the shape of a full-length mirror and suggest self-portraiture. An uninspired and uninspiring nod to some interesting thoughts. Through May 27. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Emmet Gowin / Joel-Peter Witkin—Delicate and exquisitely toned, these rich photographs find the abstract in the real. Aerial views, they show photography as drawing, photography as painting, and photography as beauty. / Evidence of photography's interrelations with other mediums is ample in Witkin's work, but his previously successful—even astonishing—combination of wit and the macabre is becoming heavy-handed; one can't help thinking that he's started to play to an audience. These works have less of his earlier suspense, invention, and risk, and none of that challenge to the tyranny of what's "normal." Through June 10. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

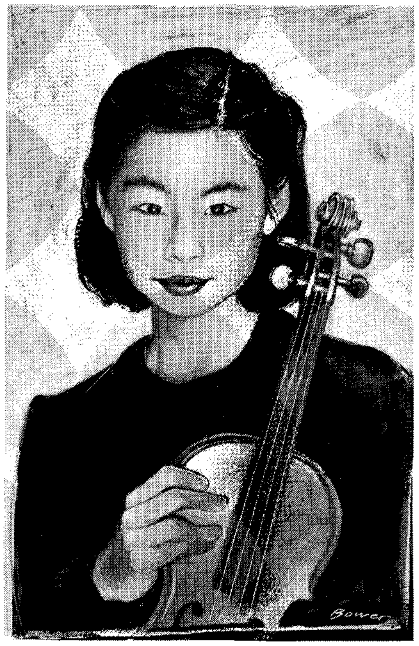
Louise Lawler—For over a decade, Lawler has been proving the postmodernist point that context alters meaning with her simple color photographs of art works as they have been arranged and displayed by herself, by private collectors, and by public institutions. Her newest show includes an incisive comment on contemporary art consumption: she pairs a photograph of Jeff Koons' very expensive, heavily publicized kitsch sculptures sitting in a gallery stockroom, as if awaiting shipment, with a smugly fashionable menu put together from "The Silver Palate Cookbook." Through May 27. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Michael Spano—Energetic compositions made up of eight different perspectives on the same few details. The work is mostly street views, and the Cubist approach Spano takes here seems just right for the non-static nature of his main subject, the city. Through May 20. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

John Yang—Yang's Cirkut-camera panoramas of golf courses are so rich and the topographies so various that despite an initial skepticism over the idea of golf-course photography as landscape art, we found it hard to stop looking. Through May 18. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)

"'Life': Through the Sixties"—This is a strong show despite the organizers' unsuccessful balancing act, which attempts to offset passages of tragedy with a bit of everything else, because it contains photographs—notably of civil-rights demonstrations, of Vietnam, and of the assassinations of the sixties—that are still piercing. Through May 21. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Short List—**Robert Capa,** Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St., closed Fridays and Saturdays (through July 5); **Stephen Frailey,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St., opens at noon on Saturdays (through May 13); **Robert Mapplethorpe,** Bridgewater-Lustberg, 529 Broadway, opens at noon (through May 13); **Christopher Williams,** Luhring Augustine, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 26).



Midori

MUSIC

THE position of educated composers in the late twentieth century has become peculiar in many ways, all much discussed. One circumstance, deplored so often that its verity is treated as a given, is that trained composers or classical-tradition composers (or whatever one calls them to distinguish those on university faculties from those on rock albums) have lost touch with music-loving audiences and performers. This comment is often presented with the observation that the composers' dedication to arcane, complex, dissonant personal systems for the ordering of notes is responsible for the prevailing state of affairs.

There is no doubt much justice in this view, but the interesting thing is that one cannot find clear and unambiguous support for the original *donnée* in New York concert life. Whatever problems may beset it, the contemporary community, including the hard-core dissonant-serialist group, continues to find (or produce) gifted performers eager to devote themselves to new and recent literature.

In the current listings, Dawn Upshaw, who sings at the Metropolitan Opera and every other institution fortunate enough to get a place on her schedule, appears with the Kronos (never-play-an-old-piece) String Quartet in what is described as "a theatre piece designed by Alessandro Moruzzi," which incorporates the two New York premières and the two other twentieth-century works on the program. Meanwhile, Gerard Schwarz, Lucy Shelton, David Gordon, and the New York Chamber Symphony are addressing themselves to a new work of Stephen Albert TreeStone; and the New York University Chamber Music Society has twentieth-century music of Schnittke, Valery Gavrilin, and Edison Denisov on its Soviet-music program at Merkin Hall. Somebody has to be listening.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. May 9 at 7:30: Erich Leinsdorf conducting works by Dvořák, Karel Husa, Busoni, and Wagner. . . . ¶ May 11 at 8, May 12 at 2, and May 13 at 8: Zubin Mehta conducting works by Dvořák and Wagner. With Midori, violin.

"Meet the Moderns"—Lukas Foss conducting the Brooklyn Philharmonic. With the Gregg Smith Singers. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. May 11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 622-1000.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducting the last concerts of the season. With Rosemary Clooney and the Concord All-Stars. (Carnegie Hall. May 12 at 8 and May 13 at 2.)

The Classical Band—This new period-instrument symphony, formed and conducted by Trevor Pinnock, will play music by Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 10 at 8.)

Solisti New York—Ransom Wilson conducting an all-Mozart program, with Beverly Hoch and Candace Goetz, sopranos; and Robert White, tenor. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 11 at 8.)

Manhattan Symphony—Sixten Ehrling conducting Brahms, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky works. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. May 12 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducting, with Alexander Toradze in Ravel's G-Major Piano Concerto. Other guest artists are Lucy Shelton, soprano, and David Gordon, tenor. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 13 at 8 and May 14 at 3.)

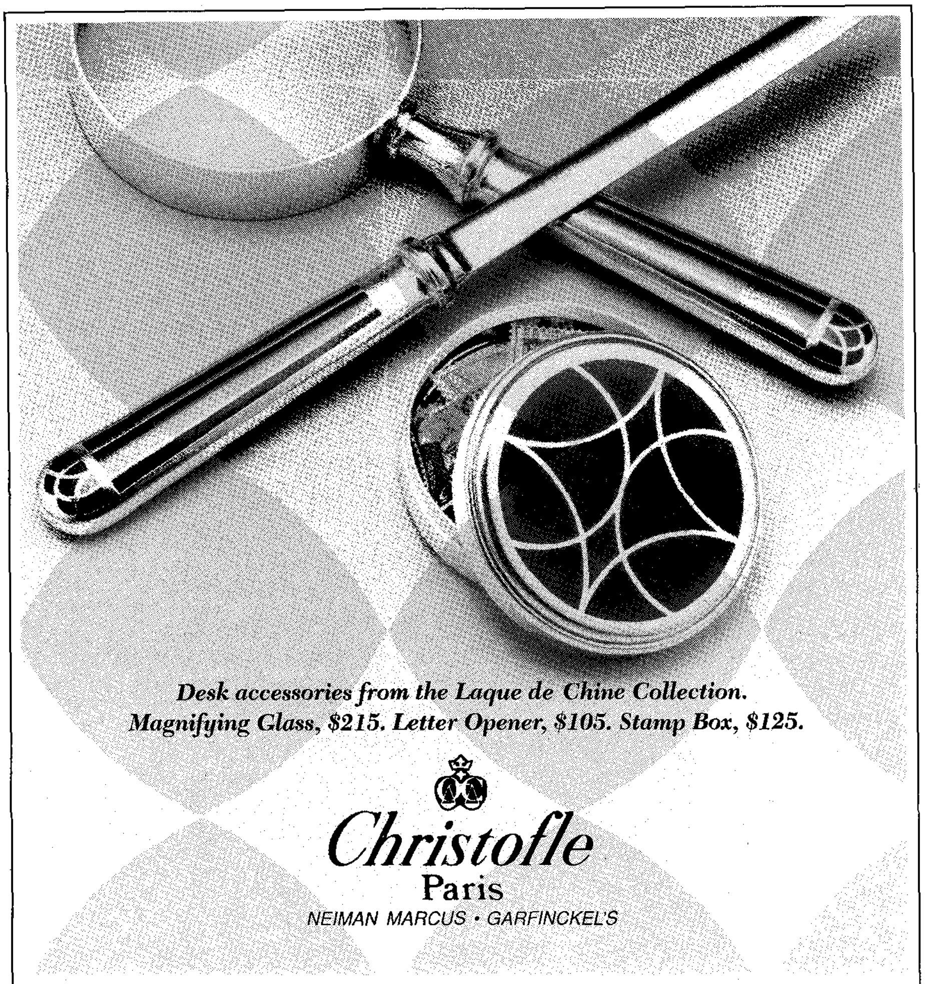
Clarion Concerts Orchestra—Newell Jenkins conducting, with Carolyn James, soprano. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 16 at 8.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble Orchestra—Guillermo Figueroa conducting and playing the violin. Three other members of the musical Figueroa family—a pianist, another violinist, and a cellist—will also be featured. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 17 at 8.)

Opera Ebony—In performances of Verdi's Requiem; Eri Klas conducting. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 690-4100. May 13 at 8.)

Canterbury Choral Society—Charles Dodsley Walker directing the chorus and orchestra in works by Stravinsky and Poulenc. With Beverly Hoch, soprano, and Mollie Nichols Shuler, organ. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 14 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

Choral Symphony Society—In a concert version



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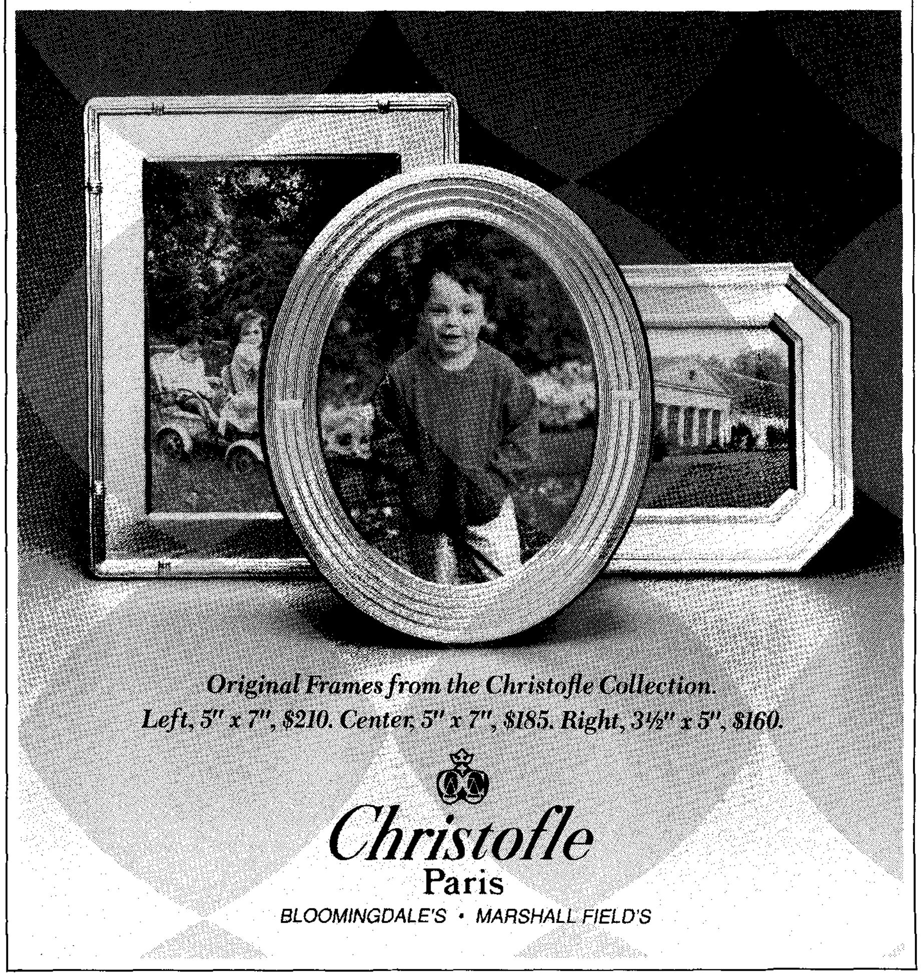

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BLOOMINGDALE'S • MARSHALL FIELD'S

of Handel's "Semele"; David Labovitz, conductor. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 15 at 8.)

RECITALS

VineyardMusicke—Presenting early music for the horn, with Lowell Greer as the soloist. (Gertrude & Irving Dimson Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. May 9 at 8.)

Chamber Music at the Y—Leon Kirchner's seventieth-birthday celebration, in which Mr. Kirchner will play the piano in two of his own compositions. With Randall Ellis, oboe; Laura Flax, clarinet; David Jolley, horn; Ida Kavafian, violin; Frank Morelli, bassoon; and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 9-10 at 8.)

Composers Concordance—In a program of contemporary American chamber music. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. May 10 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

José Carreras—Tenor. (Carnegie Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Mitsuko Shirai—Mezzo-soprano, with Hartmut Höll, piano. (Alice Tully Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Essential Music—With Isabelle Ganz, mezzo-soprano; Mia Wu, violin; Guy Klucevsek, accordion; John Kennedy and Charles Wood, percussion; and others in compositions inspired by Native American traditions. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. May 10 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Composers' Forum—Presenting an electronic-music concert. (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. May 10 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Manuel Barrueco—Classical guitarist. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 8.)

Kronos Quartet—With Dawn Upshaw, soprano. (Alice Tully Hall. May 13 at 8.)

Mannes Camerata—A program of love songs from Renaissance Spain. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. May 13 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Kazys Yakutis—Baritone. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 13 at 8:30.)

Virtuosi Quintet—Playing works for woodwinds by Robert Baksa, Anton Reicha, and Jean Francaix. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. May 14 at 2. Tickets are free with museum admission.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—The last concert of the season includes chamber music by Prokofiev, Handel, and Dohnányi. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 14 at 3.)

Downtown Music Productions—Presenting Galina Heifetz, violin; Doreen DaSilva, cello; and Mimi Stern-Wolfe, piano. (Midtown Y, 344 E. 14th St. 674-7200. May 14 at 3.)

Berenice Bramson, Hui-Mei Lin, Carter Brey, and Robert Stallman—Soprano, piano, cello, and flute. (Weill Recital Hall. May 14 at 5:30.)

Joseph Smith—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. May 15 at 8.)

Harmonie Ensemble—Steven Richman conducting works by Gershwin and Ravel. (Alice Tully Hall. May 16 at 8.)

Calliope—Performing modern and classical works on Renaissance-period instruments. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 16 at 8.)

NYU Chamber Music Society—Soviet chamber works. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 17 at 8.)

Manhattan Marimba Quartet—With Dave Samuels, vibraphone. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 17 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League/ISCM—Performing chamber music by Andrew Imbrie, Aaron Jay Kernis, Kathryn Alexander, Morris Rosenzweig, and Niel Sir. (Weill Recital Hall. May 17 at 8.)

Aurora—An early music ensemble. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 17 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

JAZZ / ROCK / POP / PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Barry Manilow—Gershwin Theatre, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Through June 3.

David Benoit—With Elements. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 10 at 8.)

Ravi Shankar—Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. May 11 at 8.

Blues Festival—May 12 at 8: James (Son) Thomas and Roosevelt (Booby) Barnes & the Playboys. . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: Jessie Mae Hemphill and Big Jack Johnson. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 834-8794.)

Royal New York Doo-Wopp Show—With Earl Lewis and the Channels, Lenny Cocco and the Chimes, the Crickets, Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. May 13 at 8.)

Tahuantinsuyo—Music and dance from the Andes. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 13 at 8.)

Jorge Pardo and Paco Peña—With the Michel Camilo trio. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. May 13 at 8.)

Performing Garage—May 11: Twelve Tone Funk Orchestra. . . . ¶ May 12: The Bern Nix trio. . . . ¶ May 13: History of Unheard Music. . . . ¶ May 14: Blue Man Group. (33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Evenings at 8.)

Jazztrack at Greenwich House—Presenting two concerts on May 13. At 8: Marilyn Crispell. . . . ¶ At 10: The Tim Berne quintet. (27 Barrow St. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bang on a Can Festival—May 10 at 8: Louis Andriessen and Frederic Rzewski. . . . ¶ May 11 at 8: John Cage . . . . ¶ May 13-14 at 9: Glenn Branca, with Michael Gordon and David Rosenbloom. (R.A.P.P. Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 529-5921.)

Benefits—For the Songwriters Hall of Fame, Paula Abdul, Liza Minnelli, Jeffrey Osborne, Dwight Yoakam, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. May 11 at 7.) . . . ¶ For the Kitchen, David Cale, John Cale, Trisha Brown, and Meredith Monk. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 16 at 7:30.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the San Diego Padres, May 12 at 7:35, and May 13-14 at 1:35 . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, May 15-17 at 7:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Texas Rangers, May 8-10 at 7:30.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—Belmont opens its gates on May 10 with the Withers Stakes, a race for three-year-olds. The Shuvee Handicap, Belmont's first Grade I race of the season, will be run on May 13. Races are run daily, except Tuesdays, through July 31; post time is one o'clock. . . . ¶ Trotting at Yonkers Raceway; Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

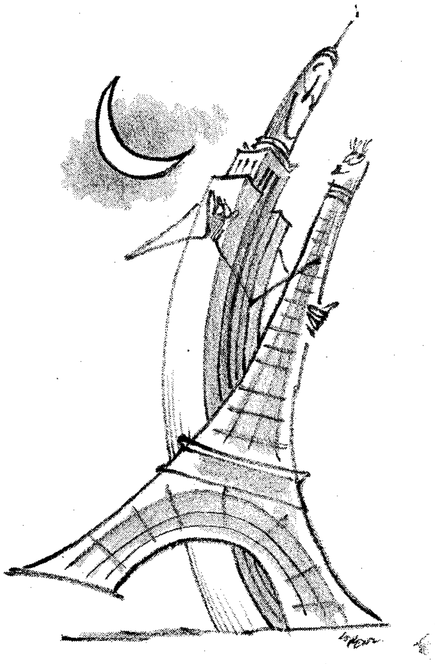
CHAMPIONSHIPS—BASKETBALL & SQUASH

N.B.A. Playoffs—Following their sweep of the 76ers, the young and scrappy Knicks continue their assault on the teams of the Eastern Conference. Pull your armchairs up to half court: CBS will broadcast semifinal games on May 13 and 14 at 1.

World Professional Squash—The top-seeded male players—Mark Talbot, Ned Edwards, John Nimick, and others—will compete on a glass court, which has been imported from Toronto. Also participating are the three Khan brothers, who will compete in the "legends" division. Quarterfinals: May 9 at 12, 6, 7, and 8; Semifinals: May 10 at 6:30 and 8; Final: May 11 at 9. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

During high school, we were about the worst runner on the cross-country team. In retrospect, the explanation seems obvious: our house was on the practice route, and every day we would jog with the team as far as our front door, slip inside and sit around for an hour or two, then jog back to school for the cool-down. We've felt guilty about this ever since, and while we're not about to run a marathon, we do like to walk a lot. May is the month for us. Twice this month, a representative of the Art Deco Society of New York will be leading us around midtown and chatting about the skyline. The 92nd Street Y, which is offering a number of tours, will sponsor one on May 14th that we find irresistible: Great Historic Disasters of New York. We'll also be heading up to Wave Hill, in the Bronx, on May 16th for a parent-oriented romp through the woods called Babies in Backpacks; and on May 20th we'll visit Marine Park, in Brooklyn, for a gander at migrating waterfowl, sponsored by New York City's Parks Department. On May 27th, we'll be engaged in the Great Saunter, a thirty-two-mile walk around the perimeter of Manhattan, sponsored by Shorewalkers. Others may drop out as they pass their apartment buildings, but we plan to go the distance.



Fête—The Eiffel Tower turns one hundred this year and the Empire State Building is throwing it a party. On Saturday, May 13, the Empire State's Fifth Avenue lobby will be hung with French flags and filled with Eiffel Tower-related exhibits, which will include models, archive materials, and at least one actual piece of the tower. The high point will be a special sequence of blue, red, and white lights that will illuminate the New York landmark.

Voguing—Performers of this freeze-frame phenomenon that derives from the poses of models in *Vogue* will compete in a benefit for DIFFA, a design-industry organization that supports people with AIDS. The judges will include Alvin Ailey and Pee-wee Herman. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. May 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 727-3100.)

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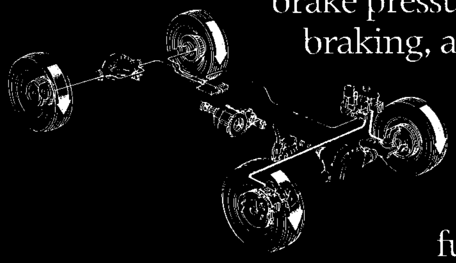

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*Source: *Kelley Blue Book:* November/December 1988, analyzing resale values of 1985, '86, '87, and '88 model year vehicles.

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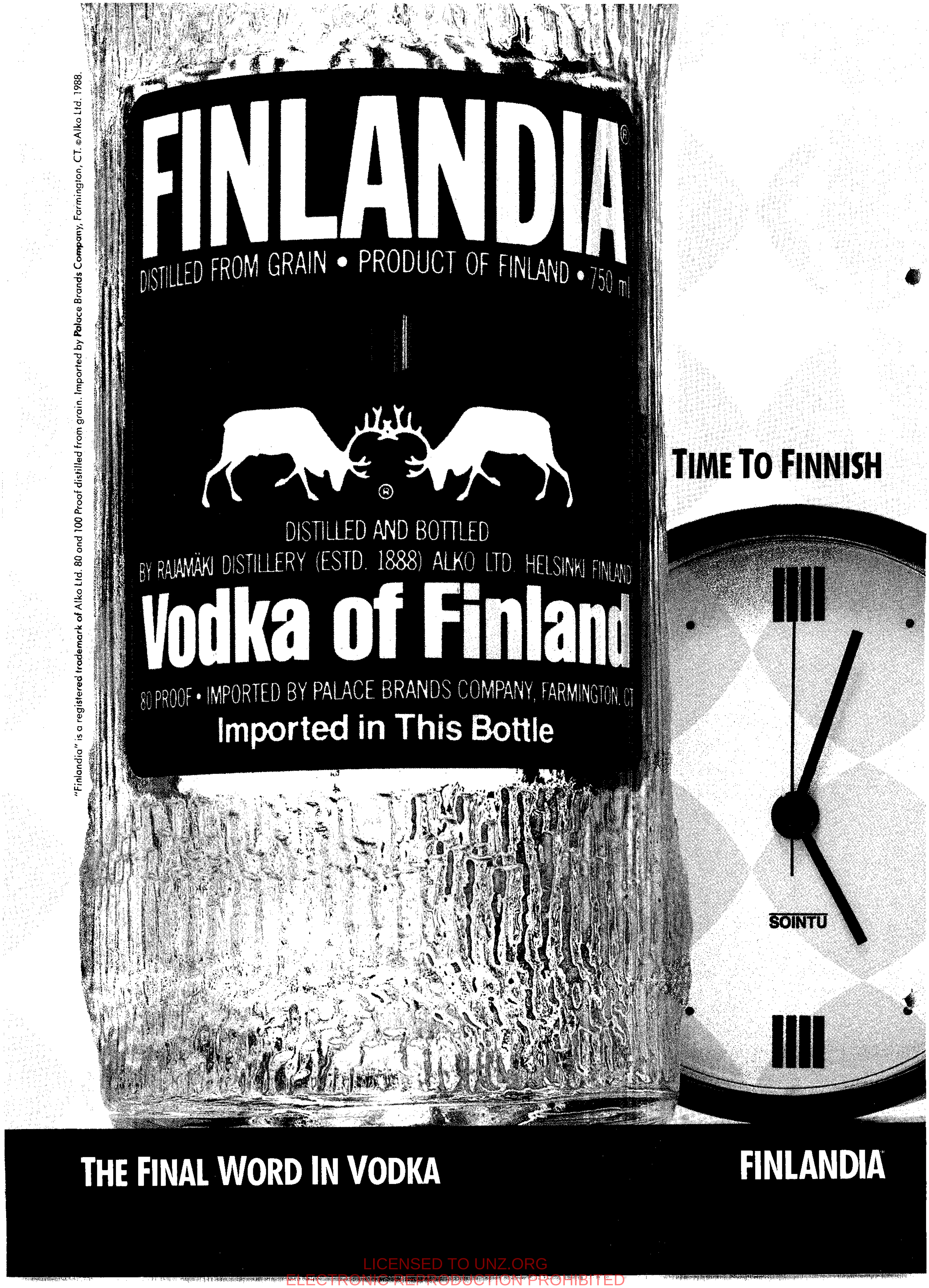
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 29.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
May 9-11: The 15th Annual Global Village Documentary Festival, featuring twenty-eight film, video, and made-for-television documentaries.
May 12: At 6, "Field Diary" (1982, directed by Amos Gitai) and "In Search of Identity" (1980; Gitai), both documentaries; at 8, "Brand New Day" (1987, Gitai), a documentary; and, at 10, "King Lear" (1988, Jean-Luc Godard).
May 13-14: At 4, "King Lear"; at 6, "Field Diary" and "In Search of Identity"; at 8, "Brand New Day"; and, at 10, "King Lear."
From May 16: At 6, "Pineapple" (1983, Gitai), a documentary; at 8, "House" (1980, Gitai) and "Wadi" (1981, Gitai), both documentaries; and, at 10, "King Lear."

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Say Anything" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dangerous Liaisons" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 11: "Miss Firecracker" (Thomas Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, and Tim Robbins. From May 12: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Scandal" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Miss Firecracker" (Thomas Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, and Tim Robbins.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Lost Angels" (Hugh Hudson), with Donald Sutherland and Adam Horovitz.
Theatre 2: "Heathers" (†).
Theatre 3: "Major League" (David S. Ward), with Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, and Corbin Bernsen.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Miss Firecracker" (Thomas Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, and Tim Robbins.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Criminal Law" (Martin Campbell), with Gary Oldman and Kevin Bacon.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Say Anything" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Signs of Life" (John David Coles), with Beau Bridges, Vincent Phillip D'Onofrio, Arthur Kennedy, and Kevin J. O'Connor.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.
Theatre 2: "Getting It Right" (Randal Kleiser), with Jesse Birdsall.

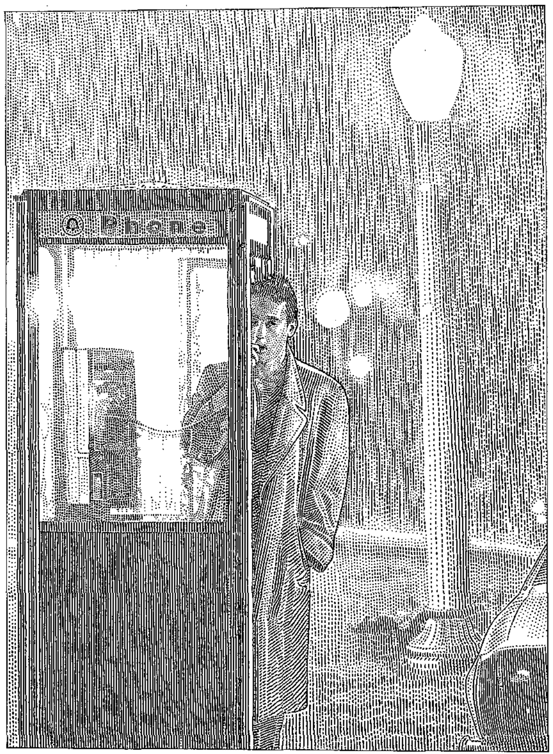
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Theatre temporarily closed.
Theatre 2: Through May 14: "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (†). From May 15: Theatre temporarily closed.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Scandal" (†).
Theatre 2: "How to Get Ahead in Advertising" (Bruce Robinson), with Richard E. Grant and Rachel Ward.
Theatre 3: "New York Stories" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through May 11: "See You in the Morning" (Alan J. Pakula), with Jeff Bridges, Alice Krige, and Farrah Fawcett. From May 12: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.
Theatre 2: Through May 11: "Loverboy" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Patrick Dempsey. From May 12: "Earth Girls Are Easy" (Julien Temple), with Geena Davis.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Listen to Me" (Douglas Day Stewart), with Kirk Cameron, Jami Gertz, and Roy Scheider.



John Cusack in "Say Anything"

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Rain Man" (†).
Theatre 2: "Major League" (David S. Ward), with Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, and Corbin Bernsen.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"La Lectrice" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Lost Angels" (Hugh Hudson), with Donald Sutherland and Adam Horovitz.

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Pet Sematary" (Mary Lambert).
Theatre 2: Through May 11: "The Horror Show" (James Isaac), with Lance Henriksen, Brion James, and Rita Taggart. From May 12: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through May 11: "Criminal Law" (Martin Campbell), with Gary Oldman and Kevin Bacon. From May 12: "Earth Girls Are Easy" (Julien Temple), with Geena Davis.
Theatre 2: "Getting It Right" (Randal Kleiser), with Jesse Birdsall.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Through May 16: "Jan Svankmajer: Alchemist of the Surreal" (†).
From May 17: "The Suitors" (directed by Ghasem Ebrahimian; in English and Farsi).

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Rain Man" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 11: (Separate admissions) "Wings of Desire" (Wim Wenders; in German, French, and English), with Bruno Ganz, Otto Sander, and Solveig Dommartin; and "Growing Up in America" (Morley Markson), a documentary, and "My Name Is Abbie, Orphan of America" (Nicola Lanzenberg), a short documentary. From May 12: "Voices from the Attic" (Debbie Goodstein), a documentary.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (†).
Theatre 2: "K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through May 11: "See You in the Morning" (Alan J. Pakula), with Jeff Bridges, Alice Krige, and Farrah Fawcett.
From May 12: "Earth Girls Are Easy" (Julien Temple), with Geena Davis.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Field of Dreams" (†).
Theatre 2: "Listen to Me" (Douglas Day Stewart), with Kirk Cameron, Jami Gertz, and Roy Scheider.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Dark Habits" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wonderland" (Philip Saville).
Theatre 3: "Stealing Heaven" (Clive Donner), with Denholm Elliott, Derek de Lint, and Kim Thomson.
Theatre 4: "Pelle the Conqueror" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Getting It Right" (Randal Kleiser), with Jesse Birdsall.
Theatre 2: "Listen to Me" (Douglas Day Stewart), with Kirk Cameron, Jami Gertz, and Roy Scheider.
Theatre 3: Through May 11: "Criminal Law" (Martin Campbell), with Gary Oldman and Kevin Bacon. From May 12: "The Return of Swamp Thing" (Jim Wynorski), with Louis Jourdan and Heather Locklear.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"New York Stories" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Lawrence of Arabia" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Dangerous Liaisons" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Getting It Right" (Randal Kleiser), with Jesse Birdsall.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
Through May 11: "Pelle the Conqueror" (†).
From May 12: "Let's Get Lost" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"The Rainbow" (Ken Russell), with Sammi Davis.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Working Girl" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Lost Angels" (Hugh Hudson), with Donald Sutherland and Adam Horovitz.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Little Vera" (Vasily Pichul; in Russian), with Natalya Negoda.
Theatre 2: "High Hopes" (†).
Theatre 3: "Murmur of the Heart" (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (†).
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through May 11: "Major League" (David S. Ward), with Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, and Corbin Bernsen. From May 12: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.
Theatre 2: "Miss Firecracker" (Thomas

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Schlamme), with Holly Hunter, Mary Steenburgen, and Tim Robbins.
Theatre 3: "Scandal" (†).
Theatre 4: "See You in the Morning" (Alan J. Pakula), with Jeff Bridges, Alice Krige, and Farrah Fawcett.
Theatre 5: "Pet Sematary" (Mary Lambert).
Theatre 6: Through May 11: "Loverboy" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Patrick Dempsey. From May 12: "Earth Girls Are Easy" (Julien Temple), with Geena Davis.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through May 11: "Criminal Law" (Martin Campbell), with Gary Oldman and Kevin Bacon. From May 12: "The Return of Swamp Thing" (Jim Wynorski), with Louis Jourdan and Heather Locklear.
Theatre 2: "Getting It Right" (Randal Kleiser), with Jesse Birdsall.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Listen to Me" (Douglas Day Stewart), with Kirk Cameron, Jami Gertz, and Roy Scheider.
Theatre 2: "K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Terror Within."
Theatre 2: "Red Scorpion" (directed by Joe Zito), with Dolph Lundgren.
Theatre 3: Through May 11: "Loverboy" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Patrick Dempsey. From May 12: "Earth Girls Are Easy" (Julien Temple), with Geena Davis.
Theatre 4: Through May 11: "Say Anything" (†). From May 12: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.
Theatre 5: Through May 11: "Out of the Dark." From May 12: "Fistfighter."
Theatre 6: "Cyborg" (Albert Pyun), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Horror Show" (James Isaac), with Lance Henriksen, Brion James, and Rita Taggart.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Rain Man" (†).
Theatre 3: "Heathers" (†).
Theatre 4: "Major League" (David S. Ward), with Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, and Corbin Bernsen.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Pet Sematary" (Mary Lambert).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Listen to Me" (Doulgas Day Stewart), with Kirk Cameron, Jami Gertz, and Roy Scheider.
Theatre 2: "K-9" (Rod Daniel), with James Belushi and Mel Harris.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
Through May 11: "The Dream Team" (†).
From May 12: "The Return of Swamp Thing" (Jim Wynorski), with Louis Jourdan and Heather Locklear.

West Side Cinema I and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Criminal Law" (Martin Campbell), with Gary Oldman and Kevin Bacon.
Theatre 2: Through May 11: "Lean on Me" (John G. Avildsen), with Morgan Freeman. From May 12: To be announced.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
May 8: "Doctor Zhivago" (1965, directed by David Lean), with Omar Sharif.
May 9-10: "The Cranes Are Flying" (1957, Mikhail Kalatozov; in Russian), with Tatiana Samoilova; and "Ballad of a Soldier" (1959, Grigori Chukhrai; in Russian).
May 11: "Oblomov" (1981, Nikati Mikhalkov; in Russian).
May 12-13: "Fiddler on the Roof" (†).
May 14-15: "Anna Karenina" (1935, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Fredric March, and Basil Rathbone; and "Rasputin and the Empress" (1932, Richard Boleslavsky), with John, Ethel, and Lionel Barrymore.
May 16-17: "Nijinsky" (1980, Herbert Ross), with Alan Bates, Leslie Browne, and George de la Peña; and "The Music Lovers" (1971, Ken Russell), with Richard Chamberlain and Glenda Jackson.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through May 9: "U2: Rattle and Hum" (1988, Phil Joanou); and "Pink Floyd, The Wall" (1982, Alan Parker).
May 10-11: "Manhattan" (1979, Woody Allen), with Allen, Diane Keaton, Michael Murphy, and Meryl Streep; and "Sleeper" (1973, Allen), with Allen and Diane Keaton.
May 12-13: "Salaam Bombay!" (1988, Mira Nair; in Hindi); and "The Deceivers" (1988, Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.
May 14: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals; and "Accattone!" (1961, Pasolini; in Italian).
May 15-16: "One, Two, Three" (1961, Billy Wilder), with James Cagney, Horst Buchholz, Pamela Tiffin, Arlene Francis, and Lilo Pulver; and "Kiss Me, Stupid" (1964, Wilder), with Dean Martin, Kim Novak, and Ray Walston.
From May 17: "Dark Eyes" (1987, Nikita Mikhalkov; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Marthe Keller, Elena Sofonova, and Silvana Magnano; and "Gabriela" (1984, Bruno Barreto; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Sonia Braga and Marcello Mastroianni.

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Through May 11: "Let's Get Lost" (†).
May 12-15: "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (1973, Sam Peckinpah), with James Coburn and Kris Kristofferson; and "Ride the High Country" (1962, Peckinpah), with Joel McCrea, Randolph Scott, and Mariette Hartley.
May 16-17: "Forty Guns" (1958, Sam Fuller), with Barbara Stanwyck and Barry Sullivan; and "Rancho Notorious" (1952, Fritz Lang), with Marlene Dietrich, Arthur Kennedy, and Mel Ferrer.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
May 8: "Bull Durham" (1988, Ron Shelton), with Kevin Costner, Susan Sarandon, and Tim Robbins; and "Eight Men Out" (1988, John Sayles).
May 9: "Dillinger" (1973, John Milius), with Warren Oates, Ben Johnson, and Michelle Phillips; and "Al Capone" (1959, Richard Wilson), with Rod Steiger, Fay Spain, and Martin Balsam.
May 10: "The Miracle Woman" (1931, Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Sam Hardy, and David Manners; and "Ladies of Leisure" (1930, Capra), with Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Marie Prevost, and Lowell Sherman.
May 11: "The Blot" (1921, Lois Weber; silent); and short films by Alice Guy-Blanche.
May 12-13: "Crossing Delancey" (1988, Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert; and "Crimes of the Heart" (†).
May 14: "General della Rovere" (1959, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Vittorio De Sica; and "A Voyage to Italy" (1953, Rossellini; in Italian), with Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders.
May 15: "Together Again" (1944, Charles Vidor), with Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer; and "Over 21" (†).
May 16: "Days and Nights in the Forest" (†); and "Company Limited" (1971, Satyajit Ray; in Bengali).
May 17: "Meet John Doe" (1941, Frank Capra), with Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, and Edward Arnold; and "You Can't Take It with You" (1938, Capra), with Jean Arthur, James Stewart, Lionel Barrymore, and Edward Arnold.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 8: "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned"; 1950, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "Viridiana" (1961, Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal.
May 9: "The Fugitive Kind" (1960, Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, and Joanne Woodward; and "One-Eyed Jacks" (1961, Marlon Brando), with Brando, Karl Malden, and Katy Jurado.
May 10: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune, Machiko Kyo, and Masayuki Mori; and "Dodes'ka-den" (1971, Kurosawa; in Japanese).
May 11: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale; and "Twentieth Century" (†).
May 12-13: "The Blue Dahlia" (1946, George Marshall), with Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake, Howard Da Silva, and William

Bendix; and "The Great Gatsby" (1949, Elliott Nugent), with Ladd, Betty Field, Macdonald Carey, and Barry Sullivan.

May 14: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (†).

May 15: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse; and "Panique" (†).

May 16: "The Yearling" (†); and "The Gunfighter" (1950, Henry King), with Gregory Peck, Millard Mitchell, and Helen Westcott.

May 17: "Ride the High Country" (1962, Sam Peckinpah), with Joel McCrea, Randolph Scott, and Mariette Hartley; and "Junior Bonner" (1972, Peckinpah), with Steve McQueen, Robert Preston, and Ida Lupino.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Recent films from Argentina, all in Spanish. May 8 at 2:30: "The Lost Republic II" (1986, directed by Miguel Perez).... ¶ May 8 at 6: "Gerónima" (1985, Raul Tosso).... ¶ May 9 at 2:30: "Dogs of the Night" (1986, Teo Kofman).... ¶ May 9 at 6: "The Lost Republic I" (1983, Perez).... ¶ May 11 at 2:30: "Night of the Pencils" (1986, Héctor Olivera).... ¶ May 11 at 6: "Evita: Listen If You Want To" (1984, Eduardo Mignona).... ¶ May 12 at 2:30: "Bad Connection" (1986, José Santiso).... ¶ May 12 at 6: "South" (1988, Fernando E. Solanas).... ¶ May 13 at 2: "Evita: Listen If You Want To." ... ¶ May 13 at 5: "Bad Connection." ... ¶ May 14 at 2: "Nobody's Wife" (1982, Maria Luisa Bemberg).... ¶ May 14 at 5: "Love Is a Fat Woman" (1987, Alejandro Agresti).... ¶ May 15 at 2:30: "South." ... ¶ May 15 at 6: "Night of the Pencils." ... ¶ May 16 at 2:30: "The Days of June" (1985, Alberto Fischerman).... ¶ May 16 at 6: "Open from 6 to Midnight" (1987, Victor Dinenzon).

THEATRE 2: The National Film Board of Canada celebrates its fiftieth anniversary with five programs of short documentary, animated, and experimental films. May 8 at 3: Films from the years 1949-58; May 9 at 3: 1959-68; May 9 at 6: 1979-88; May 12 at 3: 1969-78; and May 12 at 6: 1939-48.... ¶ May 8 at 6:30: Short films by William Creston, who will be present.... ¶ May 11 at 3 and 6: "Two Dollars and a Dream" (1988, Stanley Nelson), a documentary.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36th St. at 35th Ave., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)

RIKLIS THEATRE: Movie serials (single episodes, feature-length versions, marathon showings of all chapters), mostly from the thirties and forties. May 10 at 1:10: The feature-length version of "Spy Smasher" (1942, William Witney), with Kane Richmond and Marguerite Chapman; and selected episodes of "S.O.S. Coast Guard" (1937).... May 11 at 1:10: Chapters 1-12 of "Daredevils of the Red Circle" (1939, Witney and John English), with Charles Quigley, Bruce Bennett, and Carole Landis. Three and a half hours, with one intermission.... May 12 at 1:10: Chapters 1-15 of "Drums of Fu Manchu" (1940, Witney and English), with Henry Brandon, William Royle, and Gloria Franklin. Four hours, with one intermission.... ¶ Two programs of short films by Morgan Fisher and two by Owen Land. May 12 at 7:30 and May 13 at 1: The first Fisher program. Mr. Fisher will be present on May 12.... May 13 at 4: The second Fisher program. Mr. Fisher will be present.... May 13 at 7:30: The first Land program. Mr. Land will be present.... ¶ May 14 at 3: The second Land program. Mr. Land will be present.... May 17 at 2:30: The first Land program.

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM: Through June 1: Twenty-five of the twenty-nine 1988 Peabody Award-winning television programs will be shown, including two segments from "thirtysomething," four interviews from "Bill Moyers' World of Ideas," "The Attic: The Hiding of Anne Frank," and "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour: Election '88 Coverage." Our best advice is to call the museum for time and film schedules.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—May 8 at 8: "Road House" (1948, Jean Negulesco), with Richard Widmark, Ida Lupino, and Cornel Wilde.... ¶ May 9 at 8: Two films based on Blaise Cendrars' novel "Gold: Being the Marvelous History of General John August Sutter"—"Sutter's Gold" (1936, James Cruze) and "Der Kaiser von Kalaifornien" (1936, Luis Trenker; in German).... ¶ May 10 at 8: New films by German filmmakers Michael Brynntrup, Penelope Buitenhuis, Katharina Peters, and Michael Krause.... ¶ May 11 at 8: Films by Tony Oursler, who will be present.... ¶ May 11 at 10:30: "Bakuto Gaijin Butai" (1971, Fukasaku Kinji; in Japanese).... ¶ May 12 at 8: Films by Phil Solomon, who will be present.... ¶ May 12 at 11: "Alice" (†).... ¶ May 13 at 8: Films by Larry Gottheim, who will be present.... ¶ May 13 at 11: "Alice" (†).... ¶ May 14 at 8: Films by Peggy Awesh, who will be present.... ¶ May 14 at 3: "The Flower and the Snake" (1974, Konuma Masaru; in Japanese) and "Branded to Kill" (1967, Suzuki Seijun; in Japanese).... ¶ May 15 at 8: "The Chase" (1946, Arthur Ripley), with Michèle Morgan, Robert Cummings, and Peter Lorre.... ¶ May 16 at 8: "Bad Blood" (Leos Carax; in French).... ¶ May 17 at 8: "New Angle International Video Festival," the first of two programs of award-winning short experimental videotapes.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Films, videotapes, and performances by thirty-four artists as part of the 1989 Biennial Exhibition. May 9-16: "The Last Night of Rasputin" (1989), a film by Eleanor Antin, who will introduce it with a dance performance. Showings Tuesdays at 1:15 and 6:30 and Wednesdays through Sundays at 1:15.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—MB Playhouse, a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty years. May 9-13: Alan Bennett's "An Englishman Abroad" (1983, BBC), with Coral Browne and Alan Bates.... Starting May 16: Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited, Episode 11: The Death of Lord Marchmain" (1982, Granada Television), with Laurence Olivier. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3.... ¶ Comedy specials and episodes from comedy series. May 9-13: "Bob and Ray: The One and Only" (1972).... Starting May 16: "The Real McCoys" (1957), with Walter Brennan; and "The Andy Griffith Show" (1960). Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—May 12 at 6 and 8:20: "Pilgrimage at Night" (1959, Shiro Toyoda; in Japanese), based on a novel by Naoya Shiga.

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films from Vietnam. May 12 at 3: "The Victory at Dien Bien Phu" (1964, Tran Viet).... ¶ May 12 at 7: "Brothers and Relations" (1986, Tran Vu and Nguyen Huu Luyen).

French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—May 10 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Le Schpountz" (1938, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Fernandel, Orane Démazis, and Charpin.... ¶ May 17 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Death in the Garden" (1956, Luis Buñuel; in French), with Charles Vanel, Simone Signoret, Michel Piccoli, and Georges Marchal.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen—The Baron, who lived from 1720 to 1797, was a fibber of genius—a fabulist. Terry Gilliam, who directed this special-effects extravaganza, sees his theme as the liar as artist; his Munchausen (John Neville) is a poet, a man of imagination. He's pitted against the practical men who believe in facts and compromise and conformity (i.e., the men who finance movies). The elements are here for a fantasy on the order of "The Wizard of Oz" and "Pinocchio" and the 1940 "Thief of Bagdad," yet the picture is dry and choppy and remote. The design (by Dante Ferretti) and the cinematography (by Giuseppe Rotunno) are sometimes magnificent, and there are scenes that are near-inspired. Something is missing, though: a bit of conviction—of ardor and awe. The picture is almost devoid of emotional shadings. With Sarah Polley, Oliver Reed, who's a great rampaging Vulcan, Robin Williams (uncredited) as the King of the Moon, Uma Thurman as Venus, and Charles McKeown, who co-wrote the script with Gilliam.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/3/89.) (Waverly.... ¶ Coronet; through May 14.)

Alice—The Czech animator Jan Švankmajer plays with objects the way Lewis Carroll played with words. He animates household items and worn-looking dolls, makes nonsense physical, palpable, and thus gives Alice's adventures in illogic an undertone of menace. The director—a self-described "militant Surrealist," who has been making short films since 1964—brings a pessimistic, absurdist, Eastern European sensibility to bear on Carroll's material, and his approach sometimes seems overly formal, a little rigid. But this is an extraordinary piece of work. There are sequences that are small miracles of stop-motion animation: the White Rabbit has a pocket watch sewn into his tatty fur, so whenever he checks the time sawdust spills out of him and he has to close himself up with a safety pin; the Caterpillar, a woollen sock with a pair of glass eyes and a set of chattering false teeth, delivers his message to Alice and then, alarmingly, darns over his own eyes as he settles down to sleep. "Alice" is a brilliant demonstration of the connection between a child's imagination and the lonely, obsessive craftsmanship of a great animator. Alice is played by a big-eyed little girl named Kristýna Kohoutová; she's the only human being in the movie.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Collective for Living Cinema; May 12-13 at 11 P.M.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Cinema Studio.)

Crimes of the Heart (1986)—Diane Keaton, Jessica Lange, and Sissy Spacek playing sisters and sparking off each other are something to see. The play, by Beth Henley—a comedy about wacked-out normality, set in Hazlehurst, Mississippi—has its goofy charm; it's thin material, though, and her screen adaptation is just the usual "opening out." But the three actresses put so much faith in their roles that they carry the movie, triumphantly. They take the play's borderline pathos about heartbreakingly screwed-up lives—it's a mixture of looniness and lyricism—and give it real vitality. These are inspired performances. With Sam Shepard, Tess Harper, David Carpenter, and Hurd Hatfield. Directed (without much flair) by Bruce Beresford.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 12-13.)

Dangerous Liaisons—One of the least static costume films ever made, and what costumes!

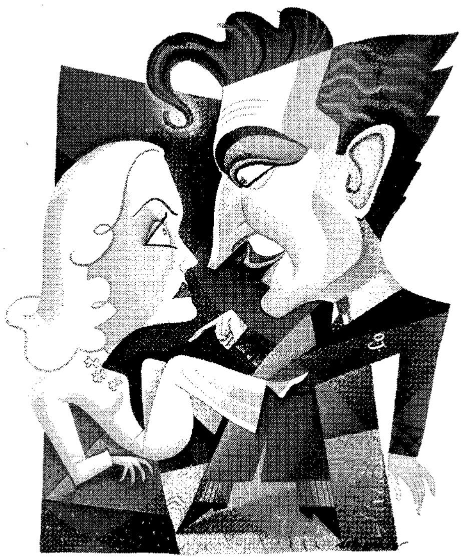
The women—Glenn Close, Michelle Pfeiffer, Uma Thurman, Swoosie Kurtz, Mildred Natwick—look as if they'd been dressed by Gainsborough. (Actually, it was James Acheson, who also dressed "The Last Emperor.") Principally about the erotic power games played by the Marquise de Merteuil (Glenn Close) and the Vicomte de Valmont (John Malkovich), who were once lovers but are now allies and co-conspirators, this first-rate piece of work by the daring and agile director Stephen Frears is alive in a way that movies of classics rarely are. The paradisially beautiful Pfeiffer is wonderfully affecting as the pawn of the debauchers' final game. The screenwriter, Christopher Hampton, reworked his 1985 theatrical version of the 1782 novel by Choderlos de Laclos; cinematography by Philippe Rousselot.—P.K. (1/9/89) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Festival.)

Dark Habits (1983; "Entre Tinieblas")—This amusingly erratic convent farce by the Spanish writer-director Pedro Almodóvar shows us his naughty-Catholic-schoolboy side. (Here, and in his later movies, he uses Catholic fetishism as camp.) Cristina S. Pascual plays Yolanda, a Madrid night-club singer, who hides out from the police in a convent that specializes in the salvation of murderesses, prostitutes, and junkies. The Mother Superior (Julieta Serrano) is so avid to recruit sinners that she'll shoot them up with heroin and supply anything else they want. (She's a junkie herself.) The jokes are sometimes labored; still, Almodóvar already had the disreputable sensuality that links him to early De Palma. And he catches something very appealing in the musical numbers, especially at the convent party where three singing nuns (including Carmen Maura on the bongos) serve as backup singers for Yolanda. In Spanish.—P.K. (5/16/88) (Quad Cinema.)

Days and Nights in the Forest (1969)—On the surface, this Satyajit Ray film is a lyrical romantic comedy about four educated young men from Calcutta, driving together for a few days in the country, and the women they meet. The subtext is perhaps the subtlest, most plangent study of the cultural tragedy of imperialism; the young men are self-parodies—clowns who ape the worst snobberies of the British. A major film by one of the great film artists, starring Soumitra Chatterji and the incomparably graceful Sharmila Tagore. In Bengali.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 16.)

The Dream Team—As a wisecracking, intermittently violent lunatic, Michael Keaton electrifies this quirky farce; in a restaurant scene, he's like a James Cagney character—doing something he knows he shouldn't while his face tells us how thoroughly he's enjoying it. Keaton, Peter Boyle (he has some of his best moments since "Young Frankenstein"), Christopher Lloyd, and Stephen Furst are patients in a mental hospital who are taken on an excursion and then stranded in an unstructured loony bin, New York City. Directed by the (erratic) slapstick specialist Howard Zieff, from a script by Jon Connolly and David Loucka, the film isn't the knockout it might have been if it had a few big wild routines. And, yes, it's sentimental. But the sentimentality isn't overplayed, and Keaton's fast rap cauterizes much of it.—P.K. (4/17/89) (Warner; through May 11.)

The Fallen Idol (1948)—Carol Reed and Graham Greene collaborated on this tricky, highly original thriller. It's about the muddled attempt of an eight-year-old boy (Bobby Henrey), the son of the French Ambassador to England, to protect the Embassy butler, Baines (Ralph Richardson), whom he idolizes, from a charge of murder. The plot is just about perfect, and there are two wonderful parallel episodes, when the child attempts to impart vital information, which two sets of adults ignore because they think he's just prattling nonsense. There are terrifying, tense moments, too; the whole movie is very cleverly worked out. Maybe it's too deliberate, though, with its stylized lighting and its rigid pacing—you wait an extra beat between the low-key lines of dialogue. It's a polite thriller—which is close to a contradiction in terms. And the key characters—the decent Baines and the typist (Michèle Morgan) whom he loves—are too ordinary, too controlled, too nice. The child actor, however, is wonderfully jittery and intelligent. (Carol Reed had a way with child performers.) And as the unhappy Mrs. Baines, the Embassy housekeeper who's a malignant disciplinarian with the child, Sonia Dresdel is really good at evil; she brings the film something out of the ordinary—something clammy and horrible. Greene based the screenplay on his short story "The Basement Room."—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 14.)



Carole Lombard and John Barrymore in "Twentieth Century"

Fiddler on the Roof (1971)—This joyously square musical succeeds in telling one of the root stories of American life. Tevye, the shtetl dairyman pulling his wagon, is a myth-sized version of a limited, slightly stupid Common Man. As Tevye's daughters marry and disperse, and the broken family is driven off its land and starts the long trek to America, his story becomes the story of the Jewish people who came to America at the turn of the century—what they left behind and what they brought with them. The movie offers the pleasures of big, bold strokes; it's American folk opera, commercial style. It's not a celebration of Jewishness; it's a celebration of the sensual pleasures of staying alive and of trying to hang on to a bit of ceremony, too. Isaac Stern plays the theme (as he does in the solo parts throughout the movie) with startling brio and attack, and Topol's Tevye has the same vitality and sweetness and gaiety as Stern's music; he's a rough presence, masculine, with burly, raw strength. Directed by Norman Jewison, from Joseph Stein's play, based on Sholom Aleichem's stories. The music is by Jerry Bock, the functional, uninspired lyrics by Sheldon Harnick. The picture was originally three hours long and was run in two parts, with an intermission; then it was trimmed, and then trimmed again when it was reissued in 1979. Altogether, it lost thirty-two minutes.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; May 12-13.)

Field of Dreams—Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. The writer-director, Phil Alden Robinson (who adapted W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel, "Shoeless Joe"), may treat us as if our brains were mush, but he'd just about have to be sincere to work so methodically, putting each new miracle in its narrative slot, and providing this doggerel emotion, these corn-fed epiphanies. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. With Amy Madigan, James Earl Jones, Burt Lancaster, Dwier Brown as the father, and Gaby Hoffman.—P.K. (5/1/89) (Bay Cinema, 59th Street East Cinema, Art Greenwich Twin, Carnegie Hall Cinema, and Regency.)

Heathers—Westerburg High's three rich beauties who make life hell for those less gilded are all named Heather. Their reluctant associate, Veronica (Winona Ryder), confides in her diary that she dreams of "a world without Heather," and a psychotically fearless juvenile delinquent, J.D. (Christian Slater), materializes, and goads her to become his accomplice in making her dream come true. The script, by Daniel Waters, has a lot of prankish, spiky dialogue and some good rowdy slapstick nastiness, such as Veronica and J.D.'s killing two football heroes and arranging their deaths to suggest that they were lovers in a suicide pact; the script promises that the picture will lift off into the junior division of Blue Velvetland. But layers of didacticism weigh it down, and the young, inexperienced director, Michael Lehmann (who uses hyper-bright colors for a facetious artificial effect), doesn't find the right moods for the gags. Where's the sting?—P.K. (4/17/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Embassy.)

High Hopes—Mike Leigh's wacked-out comedy-drama about life in Thatcherland features three couples: the rich twits (David Bamber and Lesley Manville as a young champagne dealer and his cool socialite wife); the pushy yups (Philip Jackson and Heather Tobias as a boorish car salesman and his shrill, social-climber wife); the working poor (bearded Philip Davis and dark-eyed Ruth Sheen as a pot-smoking Marxist who scrapes by as a motorcycle messenger and his companion of ten years, who likes to grow things). This may sound like a liberal-left horror, but the English delight in extreme, preposterous silliness hasn't died even among the serious left: the characters keep turning into absurdist cartoons. It's an exuberantly likable movie—not always satisfying but never drab, never ordinary.—P.K. (2/20/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Jan Švankmajer: Alchemist of the Surreal—The films of the Czech animator Jan Švankmajer are magically sinister and grotesquely witty, like the stories of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Even more than the 1988 Lewis Carroll adaptation, "Alice" (see above), which was Švankmajer's first feature film, the eight shorts in this program (made between 1964 and 1983) are evidence that this is one of the rare, great artists of the uncanny. The films are fiercely concentrated, prodigiously inventive, and as unnerving as half-remembered nightmares. Several of them mix live action with different styles of animation—puppets, clay, objects—and one, "The Ossuary," is strictly documentary (it's the least successful of these films). There are four outright masterpieces here, each amazingly distinct from the others. "Jabberwocky" is an antic and eerie interpretation of the Carroll poem, a brilliant dance of doll-house objects. "Dimensions of Dialogue" is a series of face-to-face encounters of variously composed heads. "Down to the Cellar" is a suggestive little story (largely live-action) about a small girl's adventures in a dark basement. Perhaps best of all is "The Fall of the House of Usher," a horror film like no other: Poe's text is illustrated entirely by black-and-white images of an empty, ruined house and the bleak landscape surrounding it, and Švankmajer seems, somehow, to animate the very processes of nature—to show us centuries of decay in fifteen minutes. The other films included are "The Last Trick" (his first), "Punch and Judy," and "The Flat."—T.R. (Film Forum 1; through May 16.)

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)—If you went to see it under the delusion that it was going to be about T. E. Lawrence, you probably stayed to enjoy the vastness of the desert and the pleasures of the senses that a huge movie epic can provide. Directed by David Lean, from a script by Robert Bolt, loosely based on Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," this picture fails to give an acceptable interpretation of Lawrence, or to keep its action intelligible, but it is one of the most literate and tasteful and exciting of expensive spectacles. The central figure is played quite stunningly by Peter O'Toole, though he seems to be doing "Lord Jim"—which he was cast in a couple of years later (and then it looked as if he were doing Lawrence all over again). Bolt and Lean turn the hero into such a flamboyant poetic enigma that he is displaced in the film by a simpler hero—Omar Sharif's Ali, a handsome sheikh with liquid brown eyes and conventionally sympathetic lines to speak. As it became apparent that

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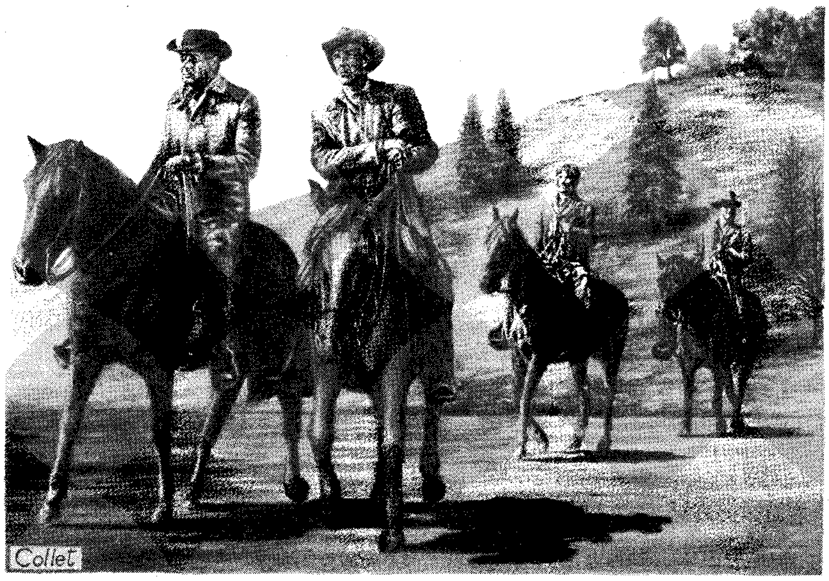
most people in the audience hadn't the remotest idea of what the Arabs and the Turks were doing in the First World War, or which was which, or why the English cared, the question raised by the movie was, Can complicated historical events and a complex hero really get across in a spectacle? With Alec Guinness, José Ferrer, Anthony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy, Jack Hawkins, Claude Rains, Anthony Quayle, and Donald Wolfit. Cinematography by Freddie Young; music by Maurice Jarre. (The film, substantially cut after its first release, has been restored to a more or less definitive version, running 217 minutes.)—P.K. (Ziegfeld.)

La Lectrice—Michel Deville's film has a gimmicky structure: a woman (Miou-Miou), in bed with her lover, reads aloud to him Raymond Jean's novel "La Lectrice," which is about a woman who makes her living by reading to people. The woman in bed naturally casts herself as the novel's heroine, and for most of the movie we watch Miou-Miou, as the professional reader, entertaining her various clients: a paralyzed teenage boy, to whom she reads Maupassant and Baudelaire; a general's widow, to whom she reads Marx and other political literature; a nervous businessman, whom she treats to Marguerite Duras; and so on. It's a very precious conceit. The movie is punishingly dull, because Deville is so smug about his middlebrow literacy and his mild whimsies. Miou-Miou is charming, though in a practiced, self-conscious way that isn't enjoyable. "La Lectrice" fancies itself a celebration of the delights of reading and, in a backhanded way, it sort of is: it makes you feel like staying in bed and never, ever going to the movies again. Also with Patrick Chesnais, Régis Royer, and, as the widow, the radiant Maria Casarès (of "Children of Paradise," "Orpheus," and "Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne"). In French.—T.R. (68th St. Playhouse.)

Let's Get Lost—This documentary, by Bruce Weber, isn't primarily about Chet Baker the jazz trumpeter and singer: it's about Chet Baker the love object, the fetish. And maybe because Weber, despite his lifelong fixation on this charmer, knew him only as a battered, treacherous wreck, in the two years before his death, it's one of the most suggestive (and unresolved) films ever made. The soundtrack is made up of Baker recordings that span more than three decades—the idealized essence of the man. The 16-mm. black-and-white cinematography (by Jeff Preiss) is reticent yet expressive, impassioned; the film has a great look.—P.K. (5/1/89) (Film Forum 2; through May 11. . . . ¶ Carnegie Screening Room; starting May 12.)

Murmur of the Heart (1971)—Louis Malle's exhilarating high comedy about French bourgeois life. He looks into his own back yard—the film is set in Dijon in 1954, at the time of Dien Bien Phu, and it's about the sex education of the fourteen-year-old Laurent (Benoit Ferreux), the youngest, brightest son of a successful gynecologist (Daniel Gélin) and his Italian-born wife (Léa Massari). Malle sees not only the prudent, punctilious surface but the volatile and slovenly life underneath. His bourgeois bestiary is funny and appalling and also—surprisingly—hardy and happy. This is perhaps the first time on film that anyone has shown us the bourgeoisie enjoying its privileges. Massari is superb as Clara, the carelessly sensual mother who is loved by her sons because of her indifference to the bourgeois forms, which they nevertheless accept—on the surface, that is. With Michel Lonsdale as Father Henri. The script is by Malle. In French.—P.K. (Lincoln Plaza.)

New York Stories—A three-part anthology film, with sections by Martin Scorsese, Francis Coppola, and Woody Allen. Scorsese's intensely enjoyable "Life Lessons" features a masterly performance by Nick Nolte as an Action painter who needs tumult in his life. (Richard Price wrote the script.) Coppola's "Life Without Zoe" is a forgettable attempt to use New York as a city out of the Arabian Nights. Woody Allen's "Oedipus Wrecks" is a Freudian vaudeville about a Jewish lawyer (played by Allen) who feels that if he marries a Gentile (Mia Farrow) he'll escape his mother (Mae Questel). (He doesn't stand a chance.) Allen's short-story comedy is a bit too long and schematic, but it has some genuine laughs, and a lovely performance by Julie Kavner as a hopeless involuntary comic. All told, the movie is a two-base hit.—P.K. (3/20/89) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Guild.)



Joel McCrea and Randolph Scott in "Ride the High Country"

You can hear Gilbert and Sullivan strummed on a balalaika in "An Englishman Abroad" (1983), playing this week at the Museum of Broadcasting. Directed by John Schlesinger, this hour-long made-for-BBC movie turns an incident that happened to Coral Browne—who co-stars with Alan Bates—into a brilliant social comedy. Browne was on tour in Moscow when the notorious defector Guy Burgess stumbled drunkenly backstage. The writer Alan Bennett gives Burgess (Bates) superbly droll expressions of British cultivation, such as "Not strong on irony, the comrades."

"I regard everything with irony," the great Sam Peckinpah said, "including the face I see in the mirror." Peckinpah had a gift not only for creating violent and erotic imagery but also for dramatizing clashing points of view—including those of women in men's worlds, whether in his moving 1962 Western, "Ride the High Country" (May 12-15 at the Film Forum; May 17 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), starring Joel McCrea, Randolph Scott, and Mariette Hartley, or in his warm, lyrical 1972 rodeo movie, "Junior Bonner" (May 17 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), starring Steve McQueen, Robert Preston, and Ida Lupino. Peckinpah's 1973 "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (an improved cut premières May 12-15 at the Film Forum) isn't in the same class as the other two movies. But even in "Pat Garrett" Peckinpah tosses off shots that most directors would kill for.

Over 21 (1945)—Ruth Gordon wrote the play on which it is based, and she opened on Broadway as the heroine, America's most spectacular woman wit, a Dorothy Parker-ish refugee from the Algonquin and the fleshpots of Hollywood, who accompanies her middle-aged husband, the editor of a liberal paper, to officers' training camp. Unfortunately, this heroine (played here by Irene Dunne) is extremely articulate but not nearly as funny as she's meant to be; many of the jokes turn on the mad, charming inconsequence of the feminine mind, and the whole comedy is too obviously set up, and rather self-congratulatory. With Alexander Knox, effective as the husband until he reads us an editorial sermon on the brotherhood of man, and Charles Coburn. Directed by Charles Vidor, from Sidney Buchman's adaptation.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 15.)

Panique (1946)—Julien Duvivier's psychological thriller is a devastatingly effective job of visual storytelling. Michel Simon is the stranger in a Paris suburb who is framed for murder; Viviane Romance and her lover, Paul Bernard, are the ones who frame him. The sordid, intriguingly nasty movie—taken, inevitably, from a Simenon novel—has some pretensions toward being a parable of sadistic injustice; on that level, it can't be taken very seriously. But in terms of how the sequences are planned, and how they build, it's an unusual, near-perfect piece of film craftsmanship. In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 15.)

Pelle the Conqueror—An aging, weak-willed Swedish widower (Max von Sydow) and his young son (Pelle Hvenegaard) emigrate to Denmark and find work on a large estate, where they're exploited and abused. The boy, more spirited than his father, ultimately escapes. The movie, written and directed by Bille August from a novel by Martin Andersen Nexo, isn't as dreary as it sounds. August directs with great skill and feeling, and the cinematography, by Jorgen Persson ("Elvira Madigan"), is sensational. The images are never simply beautiful—they always carry a strong emotional and dramatic charge. Yet there's a basic dullness in Nexo's material which August can't transcend. For most of the picture's two and a half hours, we're moved and bored simultaneously. In Danish and Swedish.—T.R. (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Carnegie Screening Room; through May 11.)

Rain Man—Dustin Hoffman is Raymond, an autistic savant who lives in an institution in Cincinnati, and Tom Cruise is his huckster brother Charlie, an L.A. car dealer, who kidnaps him, hoping to get hold of some of the three million dollars that their father has left in trust for Raymond's care. Hoffman upstages the movie; Cruise's performance consists of not smiling too much—so as not to distract his fans from watching Hoffman. The director, Barry Levinson, stretches out the scenes until they yawn. But the picture has its effectiveness: people are crying at it. Of course they're crying at it—it's a piece of wet kitsch. With Valeria Golino; Ronald Bass was the principal screenwriter.—P.K. (2/6/89) (Loews New York Twin, Bleecker St. Cinema, and Embassy.)

Say Anything—With John Cusack, Ione Skye, and John Mahoney; directed by Cameron Crowe. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Gotham Cinema. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through May 11.)

Scandal—With John Hurt and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, directed by Michael Caton-Jones. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gramercy, Cinema I, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Twentieth Century (1934)—A first-rate hard-boiled farce about theatrical personalities. John Barrymore was a great farceur, and his performance as the egomaniac producer Oscar Jaffe is a roaring caricature of theatrical drive and temperament. It was Carole Lombard's performance as Jaffe's protégée, Lily Garland (née Mildred Plotka), who has become a movie star, that established her as a comedienne. Lombard's talents here are not of the highest, but her spirits are, and in her skintight satins she incarnates the giddy glamour of thirties comedy. Most of the action takes place on the crack train of the title —the Twentieth Century, going from Chicago to New York—which represented the latest thing in speed and luxury. The script, by Hecht and MacArthur from their play (which was a reworking of Bruce Millholland's play "Napoleon on Broadway"), is freely, carelessly irreverent, with affectionate, corny ethnic humor and wisecracks about religion. Howard Hawks directed in a fast, entertaining style—punching up the lines; it's the style he later perfected in "His Girl Friday" (from Hecht and MacArthur's "The Front Page"). With Ralph Forbes, and a batch of character actors whose faces were once as familiar to audiences as the faces with great names: Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, Charles Levison, Etienne Girardot, Edgar Kennedy, Edward Gargan, and Herman Bing.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 11.)

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown—The most original pop writer-director of the eighties, Pedro Almodóvar is Godard with a human face—a happy face. The artificial is what sends him sky high, and the Madrid of this film is (as the closing song has it) "Puro Teatro." This is a movie where after a while you can't tell sexy from funny. Pepa (Carmen Maura), an actress who works in TV and commercials, turns on her answering machine and learns that she has been jilted. Infuriated, she dashes around, on spike heels, in a short, tight skirt, trying to confront her long-time live-in lover, the elegant, vain Iván (Fernando Guillén). The women of the title include Iván's early lover (Julieta Serrano), his new lover (Kiti Manver), and two (Rossy De Palma and María Barranco) who are involved with his son (Antonio Banderas). Sleek-legged and chic, they run the theatrical gamut. Cinematography by José Luis Alcaine. In Spanish.—P.K. (11/14/88) (Cinema Studio.)

Working Girl—Mike Nichols made this yuppie Cinderella romance, with Melanie Griffith as Tess McGill, a poor but enterprising girl from Staten Island who fights off the sleazoid bosses and struggles to break through the educational-background barriers and climb from Wall Street secretary to executive. We're supposed to be cheered by watching Tess become part of the establishment. Griffith is very appealing, and she carries what there is of the picture, but this is the kind of star performance in which the heroine's misty eyes and soft-focus smiles (which suggest bleariness) are supposed to turn our brains to jelly. After a bouncy, promising opening, the staging becomes so broad you can't tell whether satire is intended or just dumb jokes. With Sigourney Weaver, Harrison Ford, Joan Cusack, Alec Baldwin, Kevin Spacey, Nora Dunn, Philip Bosco, and Olympia Dukakis. The script is credited to Kevin Wade.—P.K. (1/9/89) (Cinema 3.)

The Yearling (1946)—The yearling is a boy's pet deer, and it represents the freedom of the boy's childhood. But when the deer becomes destructive, the boy's mother shoots it. Claude Jarman, Jr., plays the boy, Jody, Gregory Peck is his farmer father, and Jane Wyman is surprisingly effective as the hard-bitten, unimaginative mother. An actor named Donn Gift plays the boy's friend—a strange little creature called Fodderwing. What the director, Clarence Brown, does with the material is surprising even if you're familiar with other fine Brown films, such as "National Velvet" and "Intruder in the Dust." When Jody and Fodderwing are together, something quirky and magical seems to be happening on the screen; when Jody and his deer are together the boy's emotion has a fairy-tale glitter; and when Jody's mother reveals a streak of humor she's so pleased at her dumb joke that you find yourself staring in disbelief—and laughing. Even Peck seems to blend into the atmosphere. From Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' book, adapted by Paul Osborn. With Chill Wills, Forrest Tucker, Henry Travers, June Lockhart, and Margaret Wycherly. Shot on location; cinematography by Charles Rosher and Leonard Smith.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 16.)

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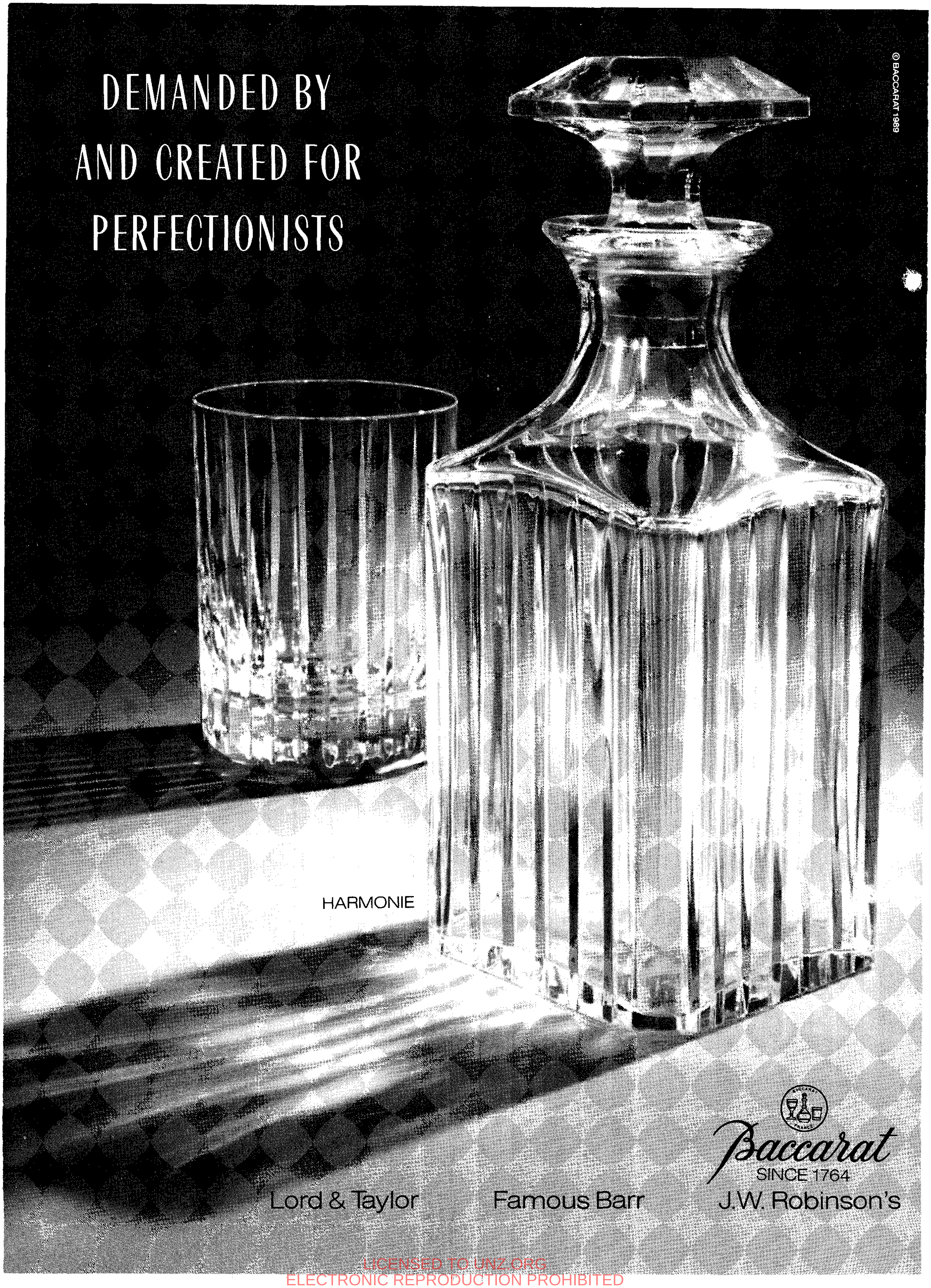
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

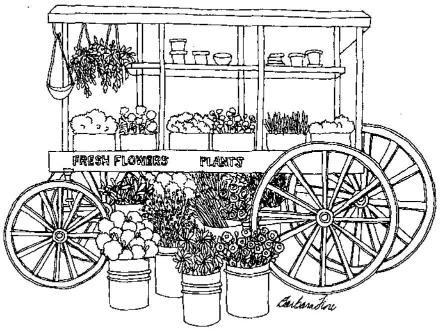
Notes and Comment

WE came down with an awful virus a while ago that was apparently the same one everybody else had had (fever of a hundred and two, achiness, headache, loss of appetite, exhaustion, depression, a feeling of being *wasted*—a feeling that life is meaningless and banal and the world is stalked by relentless evil and confused by greed and narcissism and that beauty and humor are helpless to rescue it), because whenever the phone rang and we dragged ourself over to answer it and the person at the other end said "How are you?," if we mentioned our illness, the person said "Oh, that's what I had three weeks ago." It was not the comfort that the Apostle Paul tells Christians to give to us afflicted persons, but in our condition we weren't expecting much. We felt like death on toast.

The virus appeared as a dryness in the throat on a Tuesday afternoon, and we dosed it with aquavit, the water of life. Wednesday, we stayed in bed. We lay there in dull misery all week and slept and perspired and drank water and lost eight pounds. Outdoors, it was cold and gloomy. After a week, we felt even lower, and called our doctor, who said, "That sure sounds like this virus that's going around." He recommended that we stay in bed, exactly the course of treatment that a doctor of 1789 would have prescribed, minus the leeches. We felt drained already. We couldn't remember feeling worse since a virus years ago when we were still a smoker and not even a sore throat and nausea and chest congestion could keep us from reaching for a Camel. We lit it and inhaled deeply and coughed for a few minutes and took another drag. That was worse. This was misery, but that was disgusting.

In bed, propped up with three pillows but still sagging, we read a few pounds of magazines and didn't find anything funny or interesting in them. We drank quarts of grapefruit and orange juice and ate raw carrots. We attempted to read the *Times*, our daily habit—our sacred duty to Mrs. Pearson, our ninth-grade civics teacher. Mrs. Pearson did not assign us children to delve into the sort of newspapers with big black headlines about "CRAZED BEAST RIPS LUNCH FROM TOT'S HAND," or some such. She was an educator, and believed that everyone should know the names of all the Cabinet members and what makes the rain fall and where the Seychelles are; she was a *Times* woman at heart. But day after day, sick with our hopeless virus, we picked up the newspaper and felt like a teacher with an armload of sophomore term papers. The *Times* seemed to be full of dim, dumb articles with titles like "FIBER-OPTIC CALLING TO JAPAN STARTS TODAY," "SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS: A TOOL FOR TEACHING," "TREND IN PREGNANCIES CHALLENGES EMPLOYERS," "PAIR FINDS SUBSTANCE TO CURB BLOOD VESSELS," and "MODERN CONCERNS ENRICH PASSOVER RITUALS": what one might call *a flu of writing.*

One morning, we switched on the TV. We jumped from "Good Morning America" to "The CBS Morning News" and on to "Today," skipping commercials and catching a two-hour parade of correspondents and experts and the slow drip-drip-drip of the news about scandal, disaster, and defeat, plus a few pale-faced authors flacking their books; and ninety seconds after each eager face faded from the screen we couldn't remember one thing that had been said, except that Esther Williams, promoting her line of women's swimwear, referred to the hindquarters as "buns," and a Ford vice-president, talking about the silver anniversary of the Mustang while standing next to a red one, said it had "filled a niche in the market." Our buns had filled a niche in the bed for ten days, and we wished somebody would come on TV and say, "Believe me, this is not forever, things will get better." Someone radiant but real, like Meryl Streep, who suffers so splendidly in her movies.



We owned a red Mustang back around 1967—a gallant little machine—but we don't own a car anymore. Too complicated. Like smoking. Enough was enough. A car in Manhattan is a ticket to misery. Nevertheless, car lover that we are, we would have kept ours, and kept complaining, were it not for a good thief who swiped it from a parking ramp one night, stripped it, and dumped it on the F.D.R. Drive. The insurance company paid us the book value, and we put the money in the bank. The car went to the boneyard. That was last July. We haven't thought much about cars since, or about smoking since we stubbed out our last cigarette around midnight on a Saturday years ago: the following day was St. Valentine's Day, the day we had marked "Quit." That there was our last smoke, we thought, and went up to bed sensing history in the making. We attended four movies the next day and ate a tub of popcorn, and spent most of Monday in the public library's reading room, not smoking, and gradually the habit passed.

Every life requires a bold move now and then to revive the interest of the one living it. The way to get this done is to do it. You wake up in your warm cocoon in the woods in the Adirondacks and unzip it and drop your drawers, dash out on the chilly dock, plunge into the cold, cold lake. That cheerful, Scoutmasterly thought convinced us we were recovering, and we went and took a hot shower and got dressed and put on a white shirt and a pair of jeans. We felt better out of bed, washed, with the moss scraped off, though we were unsure what day it was: there had been no word from the outside for a long while. Nobody had faxed or expressed us a thing, and the Southern, ladylike voice of our office answering machine said, "You have no new messages." The thought that downtown they are getting along pretty well without you is a desolate thought; you think, It can't keep going on like this. And it doesn't. The urge toward life is expressed by pulling on your pants, and the way to do it is to stand up and do it.

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Jukebox Saturday Night

TERESA BREWER has three grandsons, but she's still a hundred-and-five-pound waif with big brown eyes and a brassy voice. The McGuire Sisters, working together after a seventeen-year layoff, have turned blond and resemble a trio of elegant greyhounds. Julius La Rosa has evolved from the callow youth of the Arthur Godfrey show into a savvy night-club performer with a mellow baritone and an engaging line of patter. Patti Page, the shy teen-ager from Tulsa who wanted to buy the doggie in the window during the bobby-socks era, has reached middle age with her figure, her dazzling smile, and her velvety voice intact. Margaret Whiting and Fran Warren are essentially American lieder singers: they have mastered the art of turning a popular song into an intensely personal drama. And the New Ink Spots (a group that contains one man who was a substitute with the old four, and three new ones) are producing the same whispery vibrato that enchanted the people who elected Eisenhower.

All the above were in town recently for the taping of "Jukebox Saturday Night II," a musical salute to the nineteen-forties and fifties which will be presented as a public-television special next winter. (The first "Jukebox Saturday Night," a smash hit five years ago, was devoted to music of the nineteen-thirties.) When we discovered that the dress rehearsal was taking place a few blocks from our office, at the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Marquis Hotel, we ran over and introduced ourself to Jack Sameth, the executive producer, and settled down to watch the action. At one end of the room, a large, fifties-type band was warming up on a stage decorated with garlands of lights and six multicolored chrome-and-plastic jukeboxes—rented from a collector, Mr. Sameth said. The room was dark and practically empty, but in a couple of hours, he explained, its tables would be filled with more than six hundred invited guests. We asked why he had focussed his show on the fifties, and he replied that he liked the period because it was the last time that America had produced a truely homogeneous popular music. "Big bands were on the way out, but the songs that were being written at the time still appealed to a very broad audience," he said. "Then rock and roll came in, and popular music fragmented and went off in any number of directions. What we're trying to re-create here is the solid, uncomplicated sound of a golden age of song, and we've been fortunate to find a lot of singers who were working then and are working now."

We listened to some old favorites: "Do Nothin' till You Hear from Me" (Fran Warren), "Music! Music! Music!" (Teresa Brewer), "Something's Gotta Give" (the McGuire Sisters), and "Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall" (the New Ink Spots). Then we went backstage to the greenroom and talked to some of the singers who were relaxing between sets. Just inside the door we found Fran Warren and Johnny Smith, the leader of the New Ink Spots, posing for photographs and reminiscing about Amateur Night at Harlem's Apollo Theatre. Miss Warren, a petite blonde, said, "The first time I sang there, I was thirteen, and when they announced my real name—Frances Wolfe—the audience began to howl like wolves. I froze, so they took me off with the ambulance and the fire siren. But I went back two years later and won second prize and twenty-five dollars."

"I sang there with the Rivals," Mr. Smith said, "and we never did get pulled off."

"I don't know how you gentlemen do it, but you sound exactly like the group I heard more than forty years ago," Miss Warren said. "And I *know* that all of them have passed on."

"When I took over from Bill Kenny, I promised him we'd keep the same mellow sound," Mr. Smith said. "It comes from the way we all grew up singing in churches."

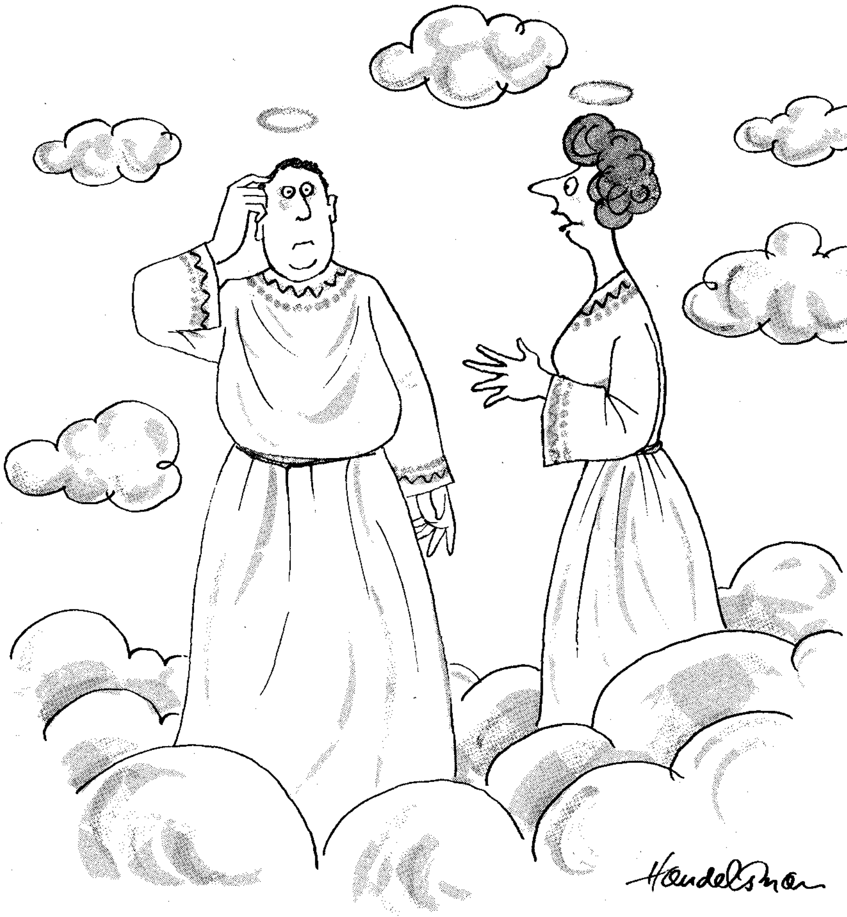
Julius La Rosa told us that he was looking forward to a pop concert with the St. Louis Symphony; Teresa Brewer recalled her first professional engagement in New York ("It was in a club called the Sawdust Trail. Since I was only fifteen and a half, they had to hide me every time the police came around"); and Patti Page remembered opening the show at the Copacabana shortly after she arrived in town, at the age of seventeen ("It was a big thrill to dress with the other girls, but they didn't encourage me to stay around for the main act, because it was Joe E. Lewis").

The McGuire Sisters came in, wearing identical pink chiffon dresses and pear-shaped diamond rings. "When we started our comeback, we were prepared for rejection," Christine said. "But then we found that every hit we ever had is still in the repertoire and that our kind of singing seems to be back in style."

"Next week, we go to Atlantic City," Phyllis said, "and at the end of May Armand Hammer is flying us out to Beverly Hills in his private jet to entertain at his ninety-first-birthday party."

Margaret Whiting told us she was making a CD for Audiophile. "It's called 'Then and Now,'" she said. "Four of the songs will be new treatments of ones that I recorded in the nineteen-forties, when I was working with Johnny Mercer at Capitol. For example, I'm doing 'It Might As Well Be Spring' as a bossa nova. Then, I'm also doing seven or eight great standards that I've never done before, like 'Small Hotel' and 'Bewitched,' and the rest will be new songs, such as 'It Was Not Exactly Paris,' which was specially written for me by Mickey Leonard and Russell George."

Then we talked for a while with Fran Warren, and she told us she was still singing in night clubs. "I worked with a lot of big bands before I went out as a single," she said. "Art Mooney, Charlie Barnet, Benny Goodman, and Claude Thornhill. But the sound I always loved was the Duke Ellington band. I auditioned for him at the old Nola studios when I was just starting out, and he told me that he liked my voice but he couldn't take me on the road, because I was too young. What he really meant was that a fifteen-year-old white singer pretending to be eighteen couldn't travel with a colored band, but I was too innocent to understand that. Years later, we did some concerts together and became good friends. Duke's favorite song was 'I'm in the Mood for Love,' and every time we worked together he'd play the introduction on the piano without any warning and just look over at me to do the vocal. Whenever I sing it, I miss him. I guess we all do."



"Don't you remember? We were at Herb and Sally's, and Herb said he knew how to achieve fusion at room temperature, using only gin and vermouth."

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The Secret of Life

STANLEY AUSTER grew up in a great egg-cream dynasty. His grandfather Louis (Pop) Auster may or may not have invented the drink, around 1890, but he was regarded as a kind of god in the family, which ran five Lower East Side candy stores. Stanley's father, Julius, and his uncles, George, Mendy, and Milton, all followed Louis into the business. In the early summer of 1942, Stanley, then fourteen, was taught the family's famous secret recipe for egg-cream syrup, and over the next four years he mixed egg creams happily and expertly behind the counter of his father's store, at Third Street and Avenue D. In 1946, the store was condemned to make way for a housing project, and he hung up his spoons and went off to college. Afterward, he had a long and satisfying career with the city Welfare Department, and didn't mix egg creams anymore. The last Auster's candy store closed in the mid-seventies. By the mid-eighties, Stanley was the only person alive who knew the family recipe, and it looked as though the authentic Auster's egg cream would never be tasted again. But a few months ago the writer Jeff Kisseloff was planning a publication party for his book "You Must Remember This," an oral history that includes Mr. Auster's reminiscences of life on the Lower East Side, and he asked Mr. Auster to mix up a batch of syrup for the event. Mr. Auster agreed to come out of retirement for one night only.

On a recent Saturday, we travelled up to the Bronx to see how the preparations were coming, and we met Mr. Auster in his kitchen, where he was mixing test batches. "From 1946 to six weeks ago, I never made the egg cream," he said, pouring a rich-looking deep-brown syrup from a gallon jug into a tall glass. A compact man of sixty-two, he still pours with the economical grace of a young counterman. "But when I started again I felt like I made it the day before. It was the most natural thing in the world, and it was very satisfying, except that the original ingredients weren't there. And the substitute ingredients are a far cry from the originals. I thought the first batch was atrocious. But Jeff said it wasn't bad at all, so I decided to try again." He gave the syrup a shot of seltzer and clacked smartly away at it with a long-handled spoon. The sound was like tap dancing. "This batch is pretty good," he said. "But on a scale of one to ten, compared with the way it used to be, this is maybe a five. The way it used to be, it was something devastating. We didn't get this fame and glory that have lasted a hundred years from some ordinary drink. Taste it. I'll get a kick out of watching you. Incidentally, don't take a little sip. Take a whole mouthful. Trust me."

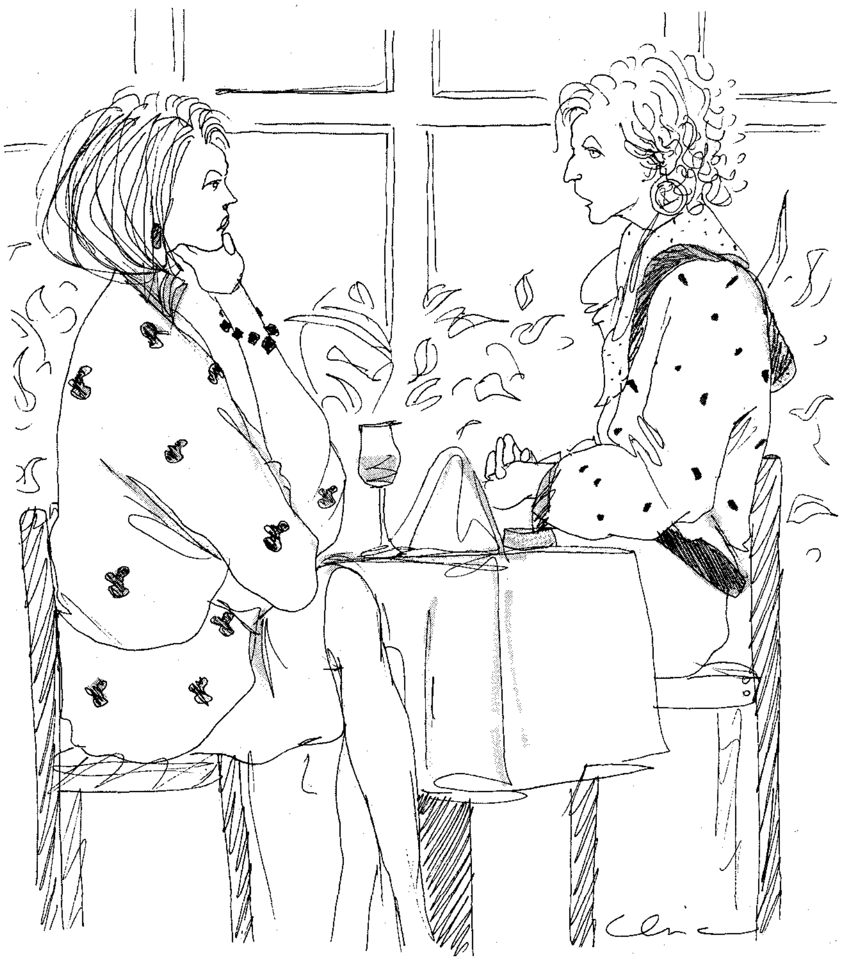
We trusted him, and drank. The foamy head smelled like the air in the mountains. The drink had a slightly grainy feeling on the tongue, and it gave an impression of weight and substance going down—a sense of serious purpose. We held out our glass for another, and asked Mr. Auster about his father's candy store.

“Third Street and Avenue D was the spot,” he said, pouring. “There were almost always dozens of people standing around conversing. It was like group therapy, although of course there was no group therapy in those days. People would come down, they'd talk, listen to stories, tell their problems, there would be some gossip. Nobody stayed at home. When they finished their dinner, they came down to have an egg cream and talk. All kinds of people, some of them very prominent. Physicians, professionals, hoodlums.” Mr. Auster said he had worked at the store every night until one-thirty, and all day during the summer, and he added, “I did it with the greatest of pleasure. I never felt I was missing anything. My parents used to tell me, ‘Go out and play, Stanley. Go with your friends.’ I said ‘Why?’ I would have been wasting my time with my friends. It was no fun with my friends. The store, this is where all the action was.”

Mr. Auster mixed and poured us yet one more. “I had all kinds of associations with the egg cream,” he said. “I knew there was no egg in it and no cream in it, yet it was called an egg cream and everybody loved it. Well, the egg. The egg is the seed. From this life emanates. And cream is that which gives life to the egg. I had this whole theory—*this was the secret of life.* People didn't realize what they were asking for when they asked for an egg cream.”

We said that it seemed a terrible shame that the family recipe might go with Mr. Auster to his grave.

“I don't intend to reveal it to anyone,” he said. “It was my family's tradition. My grandfather once said to me, ‘You moost not ever tell nobody.’ I said, ‘Of course not, Grandfather.’ It went without saying. But I've thought about this, and I have to admit that it has caused me great consternation. It would be a pity if the egg cream were gone. I've been thinking about putting the recipe in my will.”



“How's the little husband?”

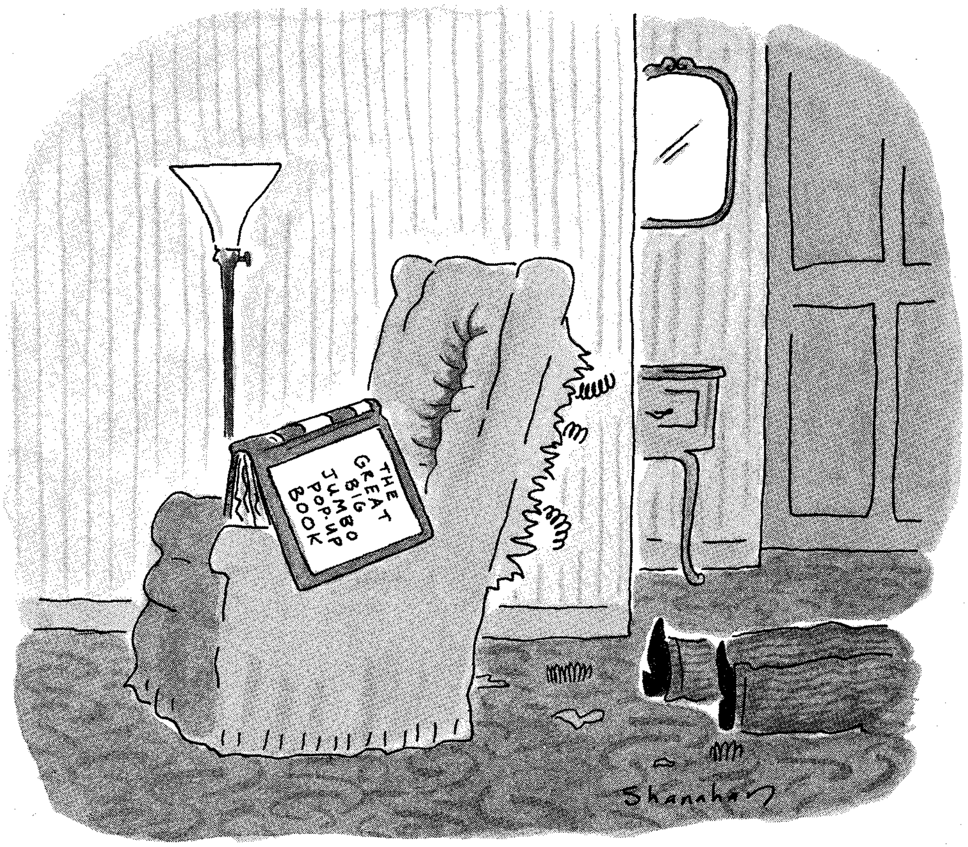
A few nights later, we ran into Mr. Auster again, at the book party. He was standing by the egg-cream bar with his wife, Carmen, receiving well-wishers and keeping one eye on the bartender. We asked if he had given the bartender any instructions.

“I gave him a few tips,” he said. “One, to keep 'em cold. Two, how much syrup to use. Three, that they have the wrong glasses. And, four, that they have the wrong spoons. Look at his motion. It's all wrong. No good. Look, they're all foam.” The crowd around the egg-cream bar was about seven deep. We excused ourself and got in line. “I'm not taking any responsibility,” Mr. Auster said.

Capoeira

Jelon Vieira is a muscular man in his mid-thirties who looks vaguely Levantine and has a close-cropped beard that wraps neatly around his face. He is the artistic director of DanceBrazil, and is credited with bringing capoeira—an Afro-Brazilian martial art and dance—to the United States. When he came here from Bahia, fourteen years ago, nobody was talking about capoeira (pronounced “kop-ware-uh”), let alone teaching it. Today, largely thanks to his Johnny Appleseed-like efforts—planting a teacher here, a student there—you can take capoeira classes in more than ten American cities, and the art form has spread beyond the Americas, to places like London, Paris, and Hong Kong. Even Hollywood has picked it up, inserting capoeira dancers or capoeira moves in movies like “Lethal Weapon,” “Rooftops,” and the upcoming Brooke Shields film “Brenda Starr.”

All this greatly pleases Mr. Vieira, we learned when we met him recently, at the Vital Arts Dance Center, on East Eighteenth Street, where he teaches capoeira classes four times a week. Under fluorescent lights, fourteen students were warming up, dressed in white T-shirts and crisp white nylon pants called *abadas*. They cartwheeled, kicked, jackknifed, and spun around on a bare wood floor while Mr. Vieira sat with us in a corner sipping coffee from a cardboard cup. “Capoeira is a dance which is a fight and a fight which is a dance,” he told us, in a heavy Brazilian accent. “I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Shanahan

don't like to say that it is a martial art, because people all over the world have been brainwashed by Bruce Lee. When you say 'martial art,' they immediately think of the Oriental arts, and capoeira has nothing to do with them."

Unlike the Oriental arts, he explained, capoeira incorporates music and dance into its moves. Not everyone agrees on the particulars of its origins, but it is commonly believed that capoeira was developed by African slaves brought to Brazil to work on the Portuguese plantations. According to the theory, the slaves invented it in order to fight their captors and gain their freedom, and they camouflaged their deadly moves and kicks by setting them to music and making them look like a harmless dance.

"A lot of people today still think capoeira is only a dance," Mr. Vieira told us. "They don't recognize the fight that is at the heart of capoeira. The original capoeiristas had to use a lot of kicks, because they were slaves and their hands were often tied. The only way they could fight then was with the head, the elbows, and the feet. Even today, the hands are used less than the feet in capoeira, and the head and the elbows are always used."

After slavery was abolished in Brazil, capoeira was periodically banned or suppressed. Until the thirties, it was classified as "a social infirmity" by the Brazilian penal code, and was thought to cause street crime and violence. Capoeiristas, who were mostly poor mulatto slum dwellers, were persecuted and sent to prison. "Capoeira had always had a bad reputation," Mr. Vieira told us, somewhat ruefully. "When you mentioned it, people used to think of street people, thugs, thieves, vagabonds—people who didn't do anything but beat up on others with their art. Also, it was practiced after work by dockworkers at seaports. When I started learning it, at the age of nine, I had to hide it from my mother, because she prohibited it. And when she found out I was practicing capoeira she gave me a good beating."

Mr. Vieira's students, who were still warming up, did not look like vagabonds or criminals. They walked around the room on their hands, or gyrated their hips like Elvis impersonators. They were barefoot, and most were in their twenties; there were five white men, four black men, four white women, and one small black boy. After the exercises were over, the students lined up in two rows and did fast cartwheels, called *aus;* upward kicks, called *bençãos;* and backflips, called *macacos* ("monkeys"). Mr. Vieira paced back and forth barking out commands in English and Portuguese: "Lower, lower!" and "Eyes off the floor!" and "Look straight ahead!" and "Tighter!" He had them pair off to practice the *ginga*—the pivotal capoeira movement, which consists of hopping back and forth as if one were standing on hot coals.

Capoeiristas like to call what they do "playing the game," and that's what Mr. Vieira and his students did before the class was over. They stood in a circle, called a *roda*, and clapped their hands to the beat of a conga drum and a tambourine. Mr. Vieira was holding a *berimbau*, a bamboo-and-wire bow-shaped instrument that, when it is struck with a stick, sounds like an amplified Jew's harp. The *berimbau* controls the pace of "the game." Mr. Vieira started banging slowly on the *berimbau*, and the class broke into Brazilian song. Two students who had been crouching inside the circle touched the ground with their fingers, shook each other's hands, and stood up to confront each other. They hopped from foot to foot in what looked like a friendly salsa dance step, but soon one of them took a flying kick at the other's head. Then the game began, in a whirl of kicks, elbows, crouches, head spins, foot sweeps, and flips that reminded us of break dancing. (Mr. Vieira, we learned later, has been erroneously credited with inventing break dancing.)

Each student took his or her turn in the *roda*, sparring, or perhaps simply dancing, for one or two minutes. And after a while Mr. Vieira put down his *berimbau* and gave his class a piece of wisdom that sounded a lot like the kind of dictum that used to be dispensed to the young David Carradine on the TV show "Kung Fu." "Remember," Mr. Vieira told his students as they panted and sweated. "Capoeira is a game, but a deadly game. You can't take anything for granted." He paused, as if searching for the right analogy in English, and added, "Capoeira is just like life."

BILLIE DYER

I

IF you were to draw a diagonal line down the state of Illinois from Chicago to St. Louis, the halfway point would be somewhere in Logan County. The county seat is Lincoln, which prides itself on being the only place named for the Great Emancipator before he became President. Until the elm blight reduced it in a few months to nakedness, it was a pretty late-Victorian and turn-of-the-century town of twelve thousand inhabitants. It had coal mines but no factories of any size. "Downtown" was, and still is, the courthouse square and stores that after a block or two in every direction give way to grass and houses. Which in turn give way to dark-green or yellowing fields that stretch all the way to the edge of the sky.

When Illinois was admitted into the Union there was not a single white man living within the confines of what is now the county line. That flat farmland was prairie grass, the hunting ground of the Kickapoo Indians. By 1833, under coercion, the chiefs of all the Illinois Indians had signed treaties ceding their territories to the United States. The treaties stipulated that they were to move their people west of the Mississippi River. In my childhood—that is to say, shortly before the First World War—arrowheads were turned up occasionally during spring plowing.

The town of Lincoln was laid out in 1853, and for more than a decade only white people lived there. The first Negroes were brought from the South by soldiers returning from the Civil War. They were carried into town rolled in a blanket so they would not be seen. They stayed indoors during the daytime and waited until dark for a breath of fresh air.

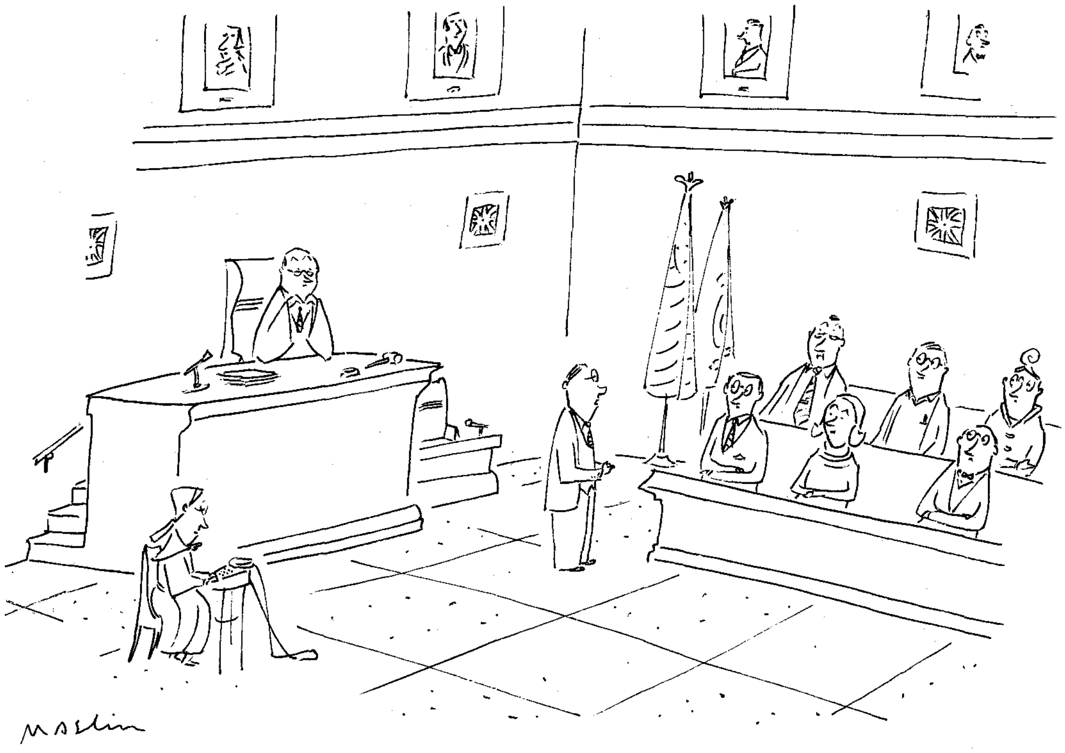
Muddy water doesn't always clear overnight. In the running conversation that went on above my head, from time to time a voice no longer identifiable would say, "So long as they know their place." A colored man who tried to attend the service at one of the Protestant churches was politely turned away at the door.

The men cleaned out stables and chicken houses, kept furnaces going in the wintertime, mowed lawns and raked leaves and did odd jobs. The women took in washing or cooked for some white family and from time to time carried home a bundle of clothes that had become shabby from wear or that the children of the family had outgrown. I have been told by someone of the older generation that on summer evenings they would sit on their porches and sing, and that the white people would drive their carriages down the street where these houses were in order to hear them.

I am aware that "blacks" is now the only acceptable form, but when I was a little boy the polite form was "colored people"; it was how they spoke of themselves. In speaking of things that happened long ago, to be insensitive to the language of the period is to be, in effect, an unreliable witness.

In 1953, Lincoln celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its founding with a pageant and a parade that outdid all other parades within living memory. The *Evening Courier* brought out a special edition largely devoted to old photographs and sketches of local figures, past and present, and the recollections of elderly people. A committee came up with a list of the ten most distinguished men that the town had produced. One was a Negro, William Holmes Dyer. He was then sixty-seven years old and living in Kansas City, and the head surgeon for all the Negro employees of the Santa Fe line. He was invited to attend the celebration, and did. There was a grand historical pageant with a cast of four hundred, and the Ten Most Distinguished Men figured in it. Nine of them were stand-ins with false chin whiskers, stovepipe hats, frock coats, and trousers that fastened under the instep. Dr. Dyer stood among them dressed in a dark-blue business suit and four nights running accepted the honor that was due him.

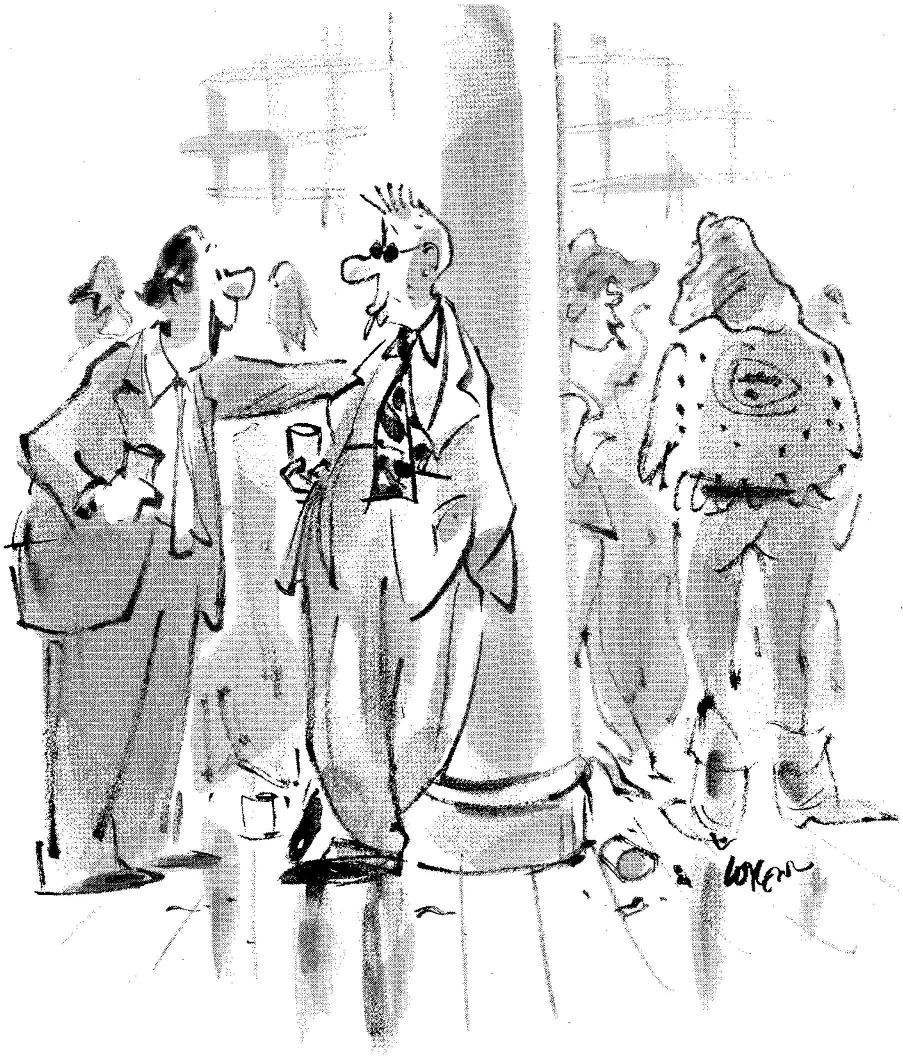
Two years later, he was invited back again for a banquet of the Lincoln College Alumni Association, where he was given a citation for outstanding accomplishment in the field of medicine.



"This trial is about more than just a bagel and cream cheese. This trial is about a bagel and cream cheese with chives."

I HAVE been looking at an old photograph of six boys playing soldier. They are somewhere between ten and twelve years old. There are trees behind them and grass; it is somebody's back yard. Judging by their clothes (high-buttoned double-breasted jacket, trousers cut off at the knee, long black stockings, high button shoes), the photograph was taken around 1900. One soldier has little flowers in his buttonhole. He and four of the others are standing at attention with their swords resting on their right shoulders. They can't have been real swords, but neither are they made of wood. The sixth soldier is partly turned but still facing the camera. As soon as the bulb is pressed he will lead the attack on Missionary Ridge. I assume they are soldiers in the Union Army, but who knows? Boys have a romantic love of lost causes. They must have had to stand unblinking for several minutes while the photographer busied himself under his black cloth. One of them, though I do not know which one, is Hugh Davis, whose mother was my grandmother Blinn's sister. And one is Billie Dyer. His paternal grandmother was the child of a Cherokee Indian and a white woman who came from North Carolina in the covered-wagon days.

Billie Dyer's grandfather, Aaron Dyer, was born a slave in Richmond, Virginia, and given his freedom when he turned twenty-one. He made his way north to Springfield, Illinois, because it was a station of the Underground Railroad. It is thirty miles to the southwest of Lincoln, and the state capital. In Springfield, the feeling against slavery was strong; a runaway slave would be hidden sometimes for weeks until the owner who had traced him that far gave up and went home. Then Aaron Dyer would hitch up the horse and wagon he had been provided with, and at night the fugitive, covered with gunnysacks or an old horse blanket, would be driven along some winding wagon trail that led through the prairie. Clop, clop, clopty clop. Past farm buildings that were all dark and ominous. Fording shallow streams and crossing bridges with loose wooden floorboards that rumbled. Arousing the comment of owls. Sometimes Aaron Dyer sang softly to himself. Uppermost in his mind, who can doubt, was the thought of a hand pulling back those gunnysacks to see what was under them.



"Bruce, you look fabulous! Who's doing your creative?"

• •

As for the fugitive concealed under the gunnysacks in the back of Aaron Dyer's wagon, whose heart beat wildly at the sound of a dog barking half a mile away, what he (or she) was escaping from couldn't have been better conveyed than in these complacent paragraphs from the Vicksburg, Mississippi, *Sun* of May 21, 1856:

> Any person, by visiting the slave depot on Mulberry Street, in this city, can get a sight of some of the latest importations of Congo negroes.
>
> We visited them yesterday and were surprised to see them looking so well, and possessing such intelligent countenances. They were very much like the common plantation negro—the only difference observable being the hair not kinking after the manner of the Southern darkey, while their feet, comparatively speaking, being very small, having a higher instep, and well-shaped in every respect.
>
> Some of the younger of these negroes are very large of their age, and are destined to attain a large growth. They all will make first-rate field hands, being easily taught to perform any kind of manual service. Their docility is remarkable, and their aptitude in imitating the manners and customs of those among whom they are thrown, is equally so.

On Decoration Day I saw, marching at the head of the parade, two or three frail old men who had fought in the war that freed them.

TWO families lived in our house before my father bought it, in the early nineteen-hundreds. It had been there long enough for shade trees to grow around and over it. The ceilings were high, after the fashion of late-Victorian houses, and the downstairs rooms could not be closed off. My father complained, with feeling, about the coal bill. Like all old houses, it gave off sounds. The stairs creaked when there was no one on them, the fireplace chimneys sighed when the wind was from the east, and the sound, coming through the living-room floor, of coal being shovelled meant that Alfred Dyer was minding the furnace. Sometimes I went into the pantry and opened the cellar door and listened. The cellar stairs had no railing and the half-light was filtered through cobwebs and asbestos-covered heating pipes, and I never went down there. Sitting in the window seat in the library I would look out and see Mr. Dyer coming up the driveway to the cellar door. If he saw me playing outside he would say "Evening," in a voice much lower than any white man's. His walk was slow, as if he were dragging an invisible heaviness after him. It did not occur to me that the heaviness was simply that he was old and tired. Or even that he might have other, more presentable clothes than the shapeless sweater and baggy trousers I saw him in. I was not much better informed about the grown people around me than a dog or a cat would have been. I know now that he was born in Springfield, and could remember soldiers tramping the streets there with orders to shoot anybody who appeared to rejoice in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. I have been told that for many years he took care of my grandfather Blinn's horses and drove the family carriage. The horses and carriage were sold when my uncle Ted persuaded my grandfather to buy a motorcar, and Mr. Dyer went to work for the lumber company.

Whoever it was that tried to worship where he wasn't wanted, it was not Alfred Dyer. He was for decades the superintendent of the African Methodist Episcopal Sunday school and led the choir. He knew the Bible so well, his daughter said, that on hearing any scriptural quotation he could instantly tell where it came from. As he was shaking the grates and setting the damper of our furnace, it seems likely that the Three Holy Children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were more present to the eye of his mind than the little boy listening at the head of the cellar stairs.

After our house there were two more, and then Ninth Street dipped downhill, and at the intersection with Elm Street the brick pavement ended and the neighborhood took on an altogether different character. The houses after the intersection were not shacks, but they were not a great deal more. Grass did not grow in their yards, only weeds. There was usually a certain amount of flotsam and jetsam. Old buggy seats, broken-down gliders, funeral baskets, whatever somebody more well-to-do didn't want and had found a way to get rid of. The Dyers' house was just around the corner on Elm Street. It was shaped like a shoebox and covered with green roofing paper. Elm Street was the dividing line between the two worlds. On either side of this line there were families who had trouble making both ends meet, but those who lived below the intersection didn't bother to conceal it.

RECIPES
Judith Shahn

As I sorted out the conversation of the grown people in my effort to get a clearer idea of the way things were, I could not help picking up how they felt, along with how they said they felt. While they agreed it was quite remarkable that Alfred Dyer's son William had got through medical school, at the same time they appeared to feel that in becoming a doctor he had imitated the ways of white people, as darkies were inclined to do, and done something that was not really necessary or called for, since there were, after all, plenty of white doctors. Apart from the doctors, the only things I can think of that the white people of Lincoln were at that time willing to share with the colored people were the drinking water and the cemetery.

Billie Dyer's mother was born in Sedalia, Missouri, the legal property of the wife of a general in the Union Army. Her father and mother

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A MOMENT AT THE LOUVRE

I'm hurrying to an urgent appointment:
inside the glass case, waiting for me
(I'm already late), is Pharaoh's quick scribe.
He is seated with legs crossed.
Absolutely attentive,
he looks at me with white eyes.
What shall I dictate to him?
What must I dictate to him?

Visitors casually stroll by, stop for a moment,
are reflected in the glass case, are erased.

Well then, the two of us.
His knees look at me with great patience.
Well then, what?
He is burnt clay,
I am clay that is gradually hardening.
What shall I bequeath him?

He sees
my silence,
carves it
onto his clean slate.

I peek at the clock, am gradually erased
from the glass, from his presence.
He didn't see that I already was.
He is waiting for me.
I am already late.

—Dan Pagis

(*Translated, from the Hebrew, by Stephen Mitchell.*)

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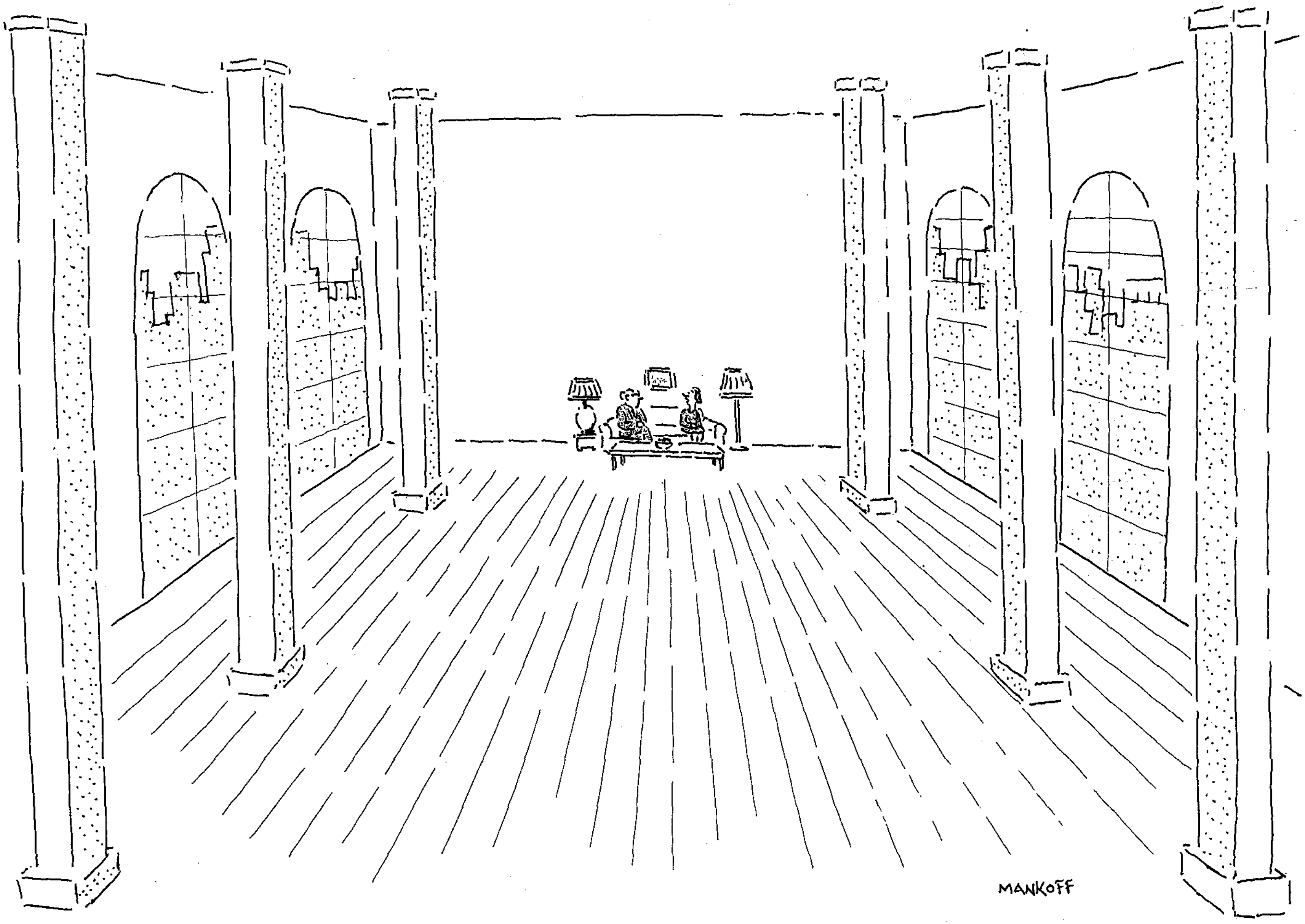


"This has been fun, dear. Can we go back to Larchmont now?"

• •

ran away and were caught and returned, and General Smith put her father on the block and he was sold to someone in the South and never heard of again. When her children asked what the place where she was born was like, she told them she couldn't remember. And that nobody could come and take her away because the slaves were freed, all of them, a long time ago, and there would never be slaves again.

For things that are not known—at least not anymore—and that there is now no way of finding out about, one has to fall back on imagination. This is not the same thing as the truth, but neither is it necessarily a falsehood. Why not begin with the white lady? When he took the clean washing in his express wagon and knocked on her back door, she called him by his brother's name. She couldn't tell them apart. He didn't let on he wasn't Clarence.

The smell of laundry soap was the smell of home. With steam on the inside of the windows you couldn't always see out.

It was raining hard when school let out. Some children had raincoats and rubbers they put on. He ran all the way home, to keep from getting wet. He threw open the front door and fought his way through drying laundry to get to the kitchen, where his mother was, and said, "Mama, I'm starving," and she gave him a piece of bread and butter to tide him over.

With his hands folded and resting on the edge of the kitchen table, he waited for his father to say, "O Lord, we thank Thee for this bountiful sustenance. . . ." Pork chops. Bacon and greens. Sausages. Fried cornmeal mush. In summer coleslaw, and sweet corn and beets from the garden.

Saturday night his mother took the washtub down from its nail in the kitchen and made him stand in it while she poured soapy water over his head and scrubbed his back and arms. When she said, "Now that's what I call one clean boy!" he stepped out of the tub, his eyes still shut tight, and she threw a towel around him, and then it was Clarence's turn to have the inside of his ears dug at with a washrag.

In Sunday school, making the announcements and leading the singing, his father seemed twice as big as he did at home. Preacher told them about the hand: "Think of it, brothers and sisters and all you children, a hand—just a hand all by itself, no arm—*writing on the wall!*" For Sunday dinner they had chicken and dumplings, and sometimes there were little round egg yolks in the gravy.

He said, "Mama, I don't feel good," and her hand flew to his forehead. Then she went and got the bottle of castor oil and a big spoon, and said, "Don't argue with me, just open your mouth." Lying in bed with a fever, he listened to the old mahogany wall clock. Tick . . . and then tock . . . and then tick . . . and then tock . . . If he told his mother a lie she looked into his eyes and knew. Nothing bad could happen to them, because his father wouldn't let it happen. But if any of them talked back to him he got a switch from outside and whupped them. It wasn't even safe to say "Do I have to?"

His sister Mary didn't want to go to school, because the teacher made fun of her and said mean things. The teacher didn't like colored children. "Why can't I stay here and help you with the washing and ironing?" Mary said, and his mother said, "You'll be bending over a washtub soon enough. Go to school and show that white woman you aren't the stupid person she takes you for." After he finished his homework he helped Mary with hers. It was hard to get her to stop thinking about the teacher and listen to what he was telling her. "Nine and seven is not eighteen," he said patiently.

He fell asleep to the sound of his father's voice in the next room reading from the Bible. The patchwork quilts were old and thin, and in the middle of the night, when the fire in the kitchen stove died down, it was very cold in the house. One night when he went to bed it was December 31, 1899, and when he woke up he was living in a new century.

When he brought his monthly report card home from school his mother went and got her glasses and held it out in front of her and said, "Is that the best you can do?" Then she put the report card where they could all see it and follow his example.

IF my great-aunt Ev's name was mentioned, my mother or my aunt Annette would usually tell, with an affectionate smile, how she cooked with a book in her hand. They didn't mean a cookbook, and the implication was that her cooking suffered from it. She had graduated from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and spoke several languages—which people in the Middle West at that time did not commonly do. The question "What will people think?" hardly ever crossed her mind. I have been told that my grandmother was jealous of her sister because my grandfather found her conversation so interesting. When her son Hugh Davis brought Billie Dyer home to play and they sat with their heads over the checkerboard until it was dark outside, she set an extra place at the table and sent one of the other children to ask Billie Dyer's mother if it was all right for him to stay for supper. Before long he was just one more child underfoot.

When he was alone with Hugh he thought only about what they were making or doing, but he never became so accustomed to the others that he failed to be alert to what they said. The eternal outsider, he watched how they ate and imitated it, and was aware of their moods. He learned to eat oysters and kohlrabi.

The first time they played hearts he left the hand that was dealt him facedown on the table. "Pick up your cards," Hugh said. "You're holding up the game." The cards remained on the table. Mr. Davis said, "When your father told you you must never play cards, this isn't the kind of card-playing he meant. He meant playing for money. Gambling." Hugh, looking over his shoulder, helped him to arrange them in the proper suits. The hand that held the cards was small and thin and bluish brown on the outer side, pink on the inner.

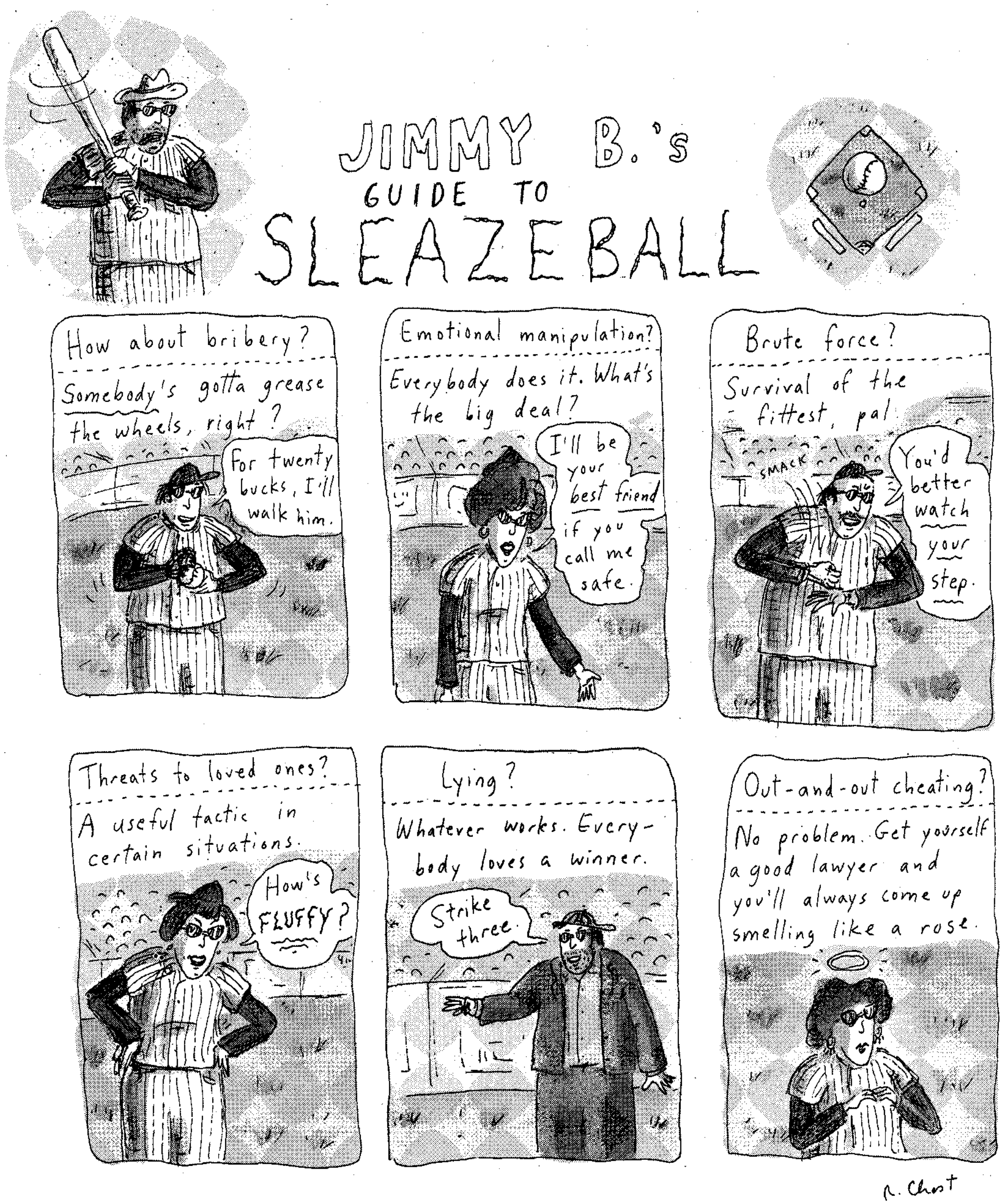
At home, at the supper table, he said, "At the Davises' they—" and his sister Sadie said, "You like it so much at them white folks' house, why don't you go and live with them?"

He and Hugh Davis were friends all through grade school and high school. On Saturdays they went fishing together, and when they were old enough to be allowed to handle a gun they went hunting. Rabbits, mostly.

HELLO, I'M MIKE McBRIDE OF NEWS THIRTEEN VACATIONING FOR HARRY SHORT.

With a dry throat and weak knees and a whole row of Davises looking up at him solemnly, Hugh embarked upon the opening paragraphs of the high-school commencement address: "The Negro is here through no fault of his own. He came to us unwilling and in chains. He remains through necessity. He inhabits our shores today a test of our moral civilization. . . ." This must have been in the spring of 1904. I imagine there was a certain amount of shifting of feet on the part of the audience.

ON his way to school, Billie Dyer had to pass an old house on Eighth Street that I remember mostly because there was a huge bed of violets by the kitchen door. I was never inside it but Billie Dyer was, and in that house his fate was decided. The house belonged to a man named David H. Harts, who was of my grandfather's generation. He had fought in the Civil War on the Union side, and been mustered out of the Army with the rank of captain. Though he had no further military service, he was always spoken of as Captain Harts. He was a member of the local bar association but applied himself energetically to many other things besides the practice of law. He was elected to the State Assembly, served a term as mayor of Lincoln, and ran for governor on the Prohibition ticket. His investments in coal mines, real estate, proprietary medicine, and interurban railroads had made him a wealthy man, but he was not satisfied to go on accumulating money; he wanted the men who worked for him to prosper also. Because coal mining was a seasonal occupation, he started a brick factory, so that the miners would have work during the summer months.


JIMMY B.'s
GUIDE TO
SLEAZEBALL
How about bribery?
Somebody's gotta grease the wheels, right?
For twenty bucks, I'll walk him.
Emotional manipulation?
Everybody does it. What's the big deal?
I'll be your best friend if you call me safe.
Brute force?
Survival of the fittest, pal.
SMACK
You'd better watch your step.
Threats to loved ones?
A useful tactic in certain situations.
How's FLUFFY?
Lying?
Whatever works. Everybody loves a winner.
Strike three.
Out-and-out cheating?
No problem. Get yourself a good lawyer and you'll always come up smelling like a rose.
R. Chast

Everybody knew that Billie Dyer got very good grades in school, and Captain Harts' son John, who was four years older, would sometimes stop him on his way home from school. After a visit to the icebox they would sit on the back steps or under the grape arbor or in his room and talk. At some point in his growing up, John Harts had eye trouble sufficiently serious that the family doctor suggested he stop studying for a while and lead a wholly outdoor life. For months he lived all alone in a cabin in the woods. Every three or four days his father would drive out there with provisions. Occasionally he stayed the night. John Harts tried not to count the days between his father's visits or to wonder what time it was. Denied books, his hearing became more acute. He recognized the *swoosh* that meant a squirrel had passed from one tree to another. He heard, or didn't hear, the insects' rising and falling lament. The birds soon stopped paying any attention to him. He made friends with a toad. As they sat looking into the fire his father told one story after another about his boyhood on a farm in Pennsylvania; about the siege of Vicksburg; about how when they were floating past what looked like an uninhabited island in the Mississippi they were fired on by Confederate infantry; about how when they were defending a trestle bridge some fifteen miles south of Jackson, Tennessee, Henry Fox, a sergeant in Company H, ran across the bridge in full view of the enemy and brought relief at the end of the day; how when they were stationed between the White and Arkansas rivers, a large number died of the malaria from the cypress swamp; how he was captured and used the year he spent in a military prison to study mathematics and science. Even though John Harts had heard some of these stories before, he never tired of hearing them. Lying awake, listening to the sound of his father's breathing, he knew there was no one in the world he loved so much. Sometimes his father brought his older brother and came again early the next morning, so that his brother would be in time for school. One Saturday he brought Billie

Dyer. With their trousers rolled above the knee, they cleaned out the spring together. When it got dark, John Harts saw that Billie Dyer wished he was home. He talked him out of his fear of the night noises by naming them. There was a thunderstorm toward morning, with huge flashes of lightning, so that for an instant, inside the cabin, they saw each other as in broad daylight.

There is no record of any of this. It is merely what I think happened. I cannot, in fact, imagine it not happening. At any rate, it is known that when John Harts went away to college he wrote to Billie Dyer every week—letters of advice and encouragement that had a lasting effect on his life. At twenty-one, John Harts went to work as an engineer for the Chicago & Alton Railroad, and while he was operating a handcar somewhere on the line an unscheduled fast train sent the handcar flying into the air. People surmised that he didn't hear or see the locomotive until it was suddenly upon him, but in any case the flower of that family was laid to rest in Section A, Block 4, Lot 7 of the Lincoln cemetery.

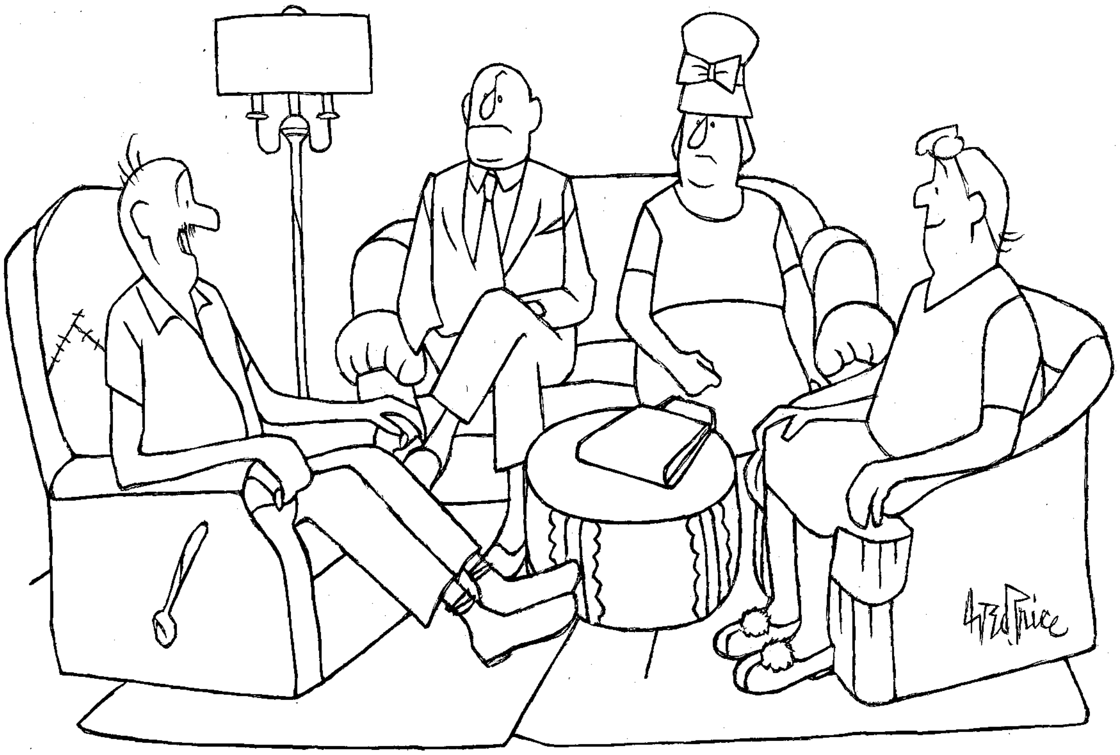
From time to time after that, Billie Dyer would put on his best clothes and pay a call on Captain Harts and his wife. When he graduated from high school, Captain Harts said to him, "And what have you decided to do with your life?" At that time, in Lincoln, it was not a question often asked of a Negro. Billie Dyer said, "I would like to become a doctor. But of course it is impossible." Captain Harts spoke to my grandfather and to several other men in Lincoln. How much they contributed toward Billie Dyer's education I have no way of knowing, but it does not appear to have been enough to pay all his expenses. It was thirteen years from the time he finished high school until he completed his interneship at the Kansas City General Hospital. This means, I think, that he had to drop out of school again and again to earn the money he needed to go on with his studies. In July, 1917, he came home ready to begin the practice of medicine, but America had declared war on Germany, the country was flooded with recruiting posters ("Uncle Sam Wants YOU!"), and they got to him. He was the first Negro from Lincoln to be taken into the Army.

II

IN 1975, a Dallas real-estate agent named Jim Wood, wandering through a flea market in Canton, Texas, bought an Army-issue shaving kit, a Bible, and a manuscript. He collected shaving memorabilia and they were a single lot. Nothing is more improbable or subject to chance than the fate of objects. On the flyleaf of the Bible was written, in an old-fashioned hand, "To Dr. William H. Dyer from his father and mother." The manuscript appeared to be a diary kept by Dr. Dyer during the First World War. Months passed before Wood bothered to look at it. When he did, he became so interested that he read it three times in one sitting. He was convinced that Dr. Dyer must have made a significant contribution to the community he lived in, wherever that might be, and to the medical profession. So, for several years, with no other information than the diary contained, he tried to find Dr. Dyer or his heirs. Finally it occurred to him to write to the Lincoln Public Library.

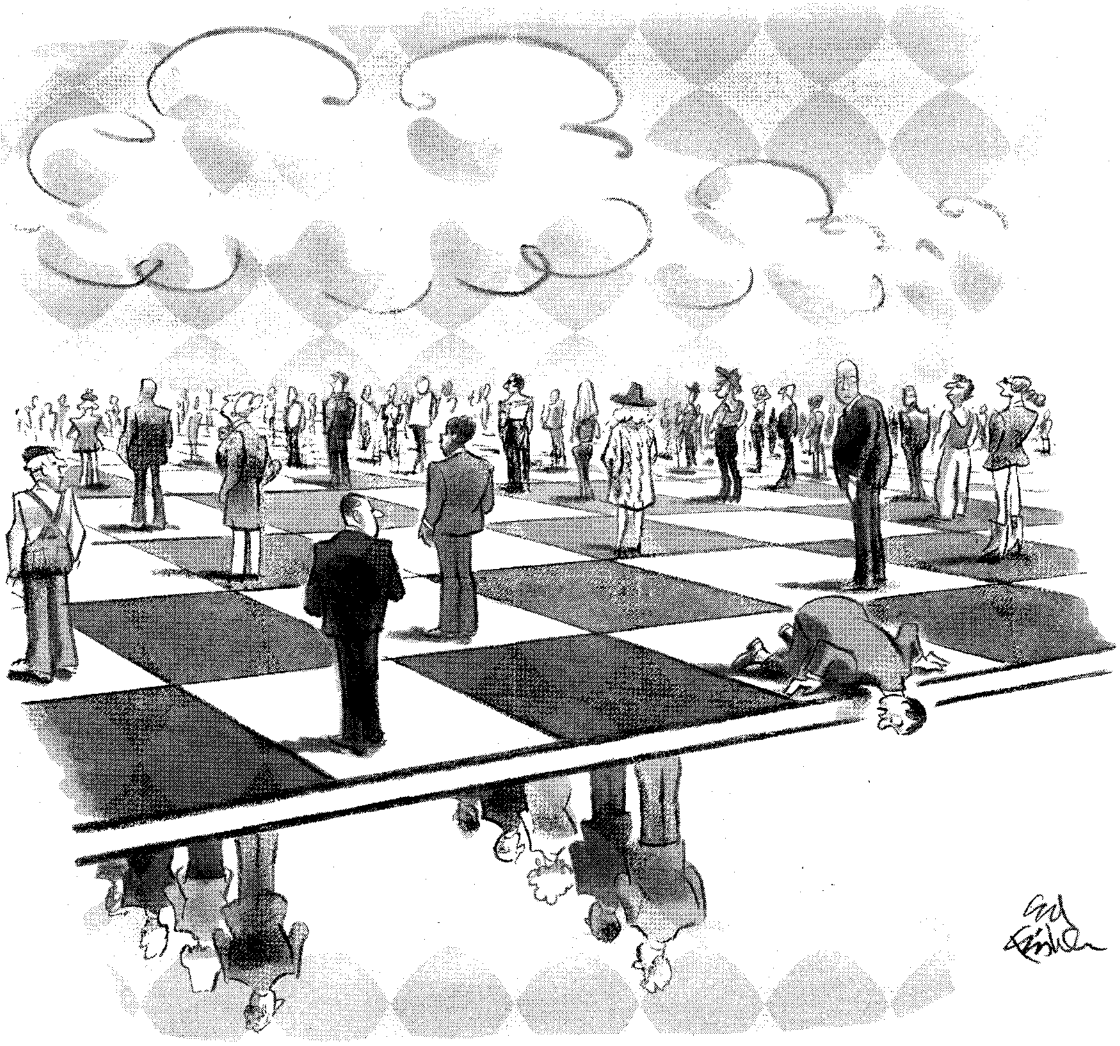
The diary is a lined eight-by-twelve-inch copybook with snapshots and portrait photographs and postcards pasted in wherever they were appropriate. That it escaped the bonfire is remarkable; that it fell into the hands of so conscientious a man is also to be wondered at.

What seems most likely is that Dr. Dyer's wife was ill and that someone not a member of the family broke up the household. But then how did the diary get to Texas from Kansas City? It is eerie, in any case, and as if Dr. Dyer had gone on talking after his death, but about a much earlier part of his life. When the odds are so against something happening, it is tempting to look around for a supernatural explanation, such as that William Dyer's spirit, dissatisfied with the life he had led (the unremitting hard work, the selfless dedication to the sick and to the betterment of his race), longed for a second chance. Or, if not that, then perhaps wished to have remembered the eight months he spent in a half-destroyed country, where the French girls walked arm in arm with the colored soldiers and ate out of their mess pans with them, and death was everywhere.



"Naomi's shrink is a living national treasure. Isn't he, hon?"

On the first page of



"I thought so! Backgammon!"

• •

the diary he wrote, "With thousands of others I decided to offer my life upon our Nation's altar as a sacrifice that Democracy might reign and Autocracy be forever crushed." In 1917, the age of public eloquence was not quite over, and when people sat down on a momentous occasion and wrote something it tended to be a foot or two above the ground.

Three hundred friends and neighbors were at the railroad station to see him off, on a Sunday afternoon, and he was kept busy shaking hands with those who promised to remember him in their prayers. Somebody took a snapshot of him standing beside his father and mother. Alfred Dyer's rolled-brim hat and three-piece suit do not look as if they had been bought for someone else to wear and handed on to him when they became shabby. He is a couple of inches taller than his son. Both are fine-looking men.

From the diary: "Mother and Father standing there with tears in their eyes . . . when I kissed them and bade them farewell. . . . My eyes too filled with tears, my throat became full, and for miles as the train sped on I was unable to speak or to fix my mind upon a single thought."

His orders were to proceed to Fort Des Moines, a beautiful old Army post, at that time partly used as a boot camp for medical officers. He was disappointed with his quarters (a cold room in a stable) and did not at first see the need for a medical officer to spend four hours a day on the drill field.

After two months he was moved to Camp Funston, in Kansas. It was the headquarters of the 92nd Division, which was made up exclusively of Negro troops—the Army was not integrated until thirty-one years later, by executive order of Harry Truman. The barracks at Camp Funston were still being constructed, and thousands of civilian workmen poured into the camp every day, along with the draftees arriving by train from Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas. He was assigned to the infirmary of the 317th Ammunition Train, and when he was not treating the sick he weeded out recruits who were physically unfit for military service. The year before, he had fallen in love with a young woman named Bessie Bradley, who was teaching in a night school. His free weekends were spent in Kansas City, courting her. In January and February, an epidemic of cerebrospinal meningitis swept through the camp and kept him on his feet night and day until it subsided. In March, he got a ten-day furlough and took Bessie Bradley to Illinois and they were married.

At Camp Funston a bulletin was read to all the soldiers of the 92nd Division: "The Division Commander has repeatedly urged that all colored members of his commands, and especially the officers and noncommissioned officers, should refrain from going where their presence will be resented. In spite of this injunction, one of the Sergeants of the Medical Department has recently . . . entered a theatre, as he undoubtedly had a legal right to do, and precipitated trouble by making it possible to allege race discrimination in the seat he was given. . . . Don't go where your presence is not desired."

This bulletin so stuck in his craw that he managed to get his hands on a copy of it, and it is written out in his diary in full, against some ultimate day of judging.

Early in June, the order came for the division to proceed to Camp Upton for embarkment overseas. Lieutenant Dyer tried to call his wife, but the troops were denied access to telegraph and telephone lines. The next day, the trains began pulling out of the camp. When his section drew into the railway station in Kansas City, he saw that there was an immense crowd. Without any hope whatever that his wife would be among them or that he would find her if she were, he put his head out of the train window and heard her calling to him.

The division was hurried from Camp Upton to the embarkation port at Hoboken and onto a magnificent old steamship that until the war had been carrying passengers back and forth across the Atlantic for the Hamburg-American line. It put out to sea with five thousand men on board, and when Lieutenant Dyer went on deck the next morning he saw that they had joined a great convoy of nine transport ships, two battle cruisers, and half a dozen destroyers. His ship was under the command of a colonel of a unit of the National Guard.

From the diary: "From the very start there was that feeling of prejudice brought up between the white and colored officers, for among the first orders issued were those barring colored officers from the same toilets as the whites, also barring them from the barber shop and denying colored officers the use of the ship's gymnasium." The sea was calm. The enlisted men were continually on the lookout for periscopes but saw instead flying fishes and porpoises and a whale that spouted. Lieutenant Dyer was assigned the daily sanitary inspection of certain compartments in the fore part of the ship, and the physical examination of six hundred men. Twice a day he submitted written reports to the ship's surgeon. On June 21st, shots were fired from all the surrounding ships at what proved to be a floating beer keg. A convoy of British destroyers brought them safely into the harbor at Brest. At nine-fifteen in the evening, when the men of his unit began to go ashore, the sun was still above the horizon. He was struck by the fact that the houses were all of stone and closely jammed together and very old, and by the expression of sadness on the faces of the French people. The women young and old all were in black and seemed to be in the deepest mourning. Four little tykes standing by the roadside sang, "Hail, hail, the gang's all here! What the hell do we care now," in perfect English. His unit marched three miles through the gathering darkness to a barracks that had been a prison camp during the time of Napoleon ("a terrible and dirty old place") and stayed there four days awaiting orders. Twice he got a pass into the city. The French people were friendly when he went into a shop or attempted to converse with them. He sat down on a park bench and children congregated around him. Soon they were sitting on his knees and, pointing, told him the French words for his eyes, nose, ears, and neat mustache.

After three days and nights on a train and a nine-mile hike, his unit ended up in a camp outside a village forty-eight kilometres southeast of Poitiers. It was a beautiful region, untouched by the war. The men pitched their shelter tents in a level field, the officers were billeted in nearby manor houses. They were the first American troops in this region, and the natives fell in love with them and came visiting every day. ("With them there was *No Color Line*.") On Bastille Day, before a great crowd, the troops gave a demonstration of American sports—footraces, three-legged races, boxing, wrestling, and baseball.

On July 22nd, Companies B and C, with Lieutenant Dyer as their medical officer, had orders to proceed to Marseilles, where they were to procure trucks for the 317th Ammunition Train and drive them to the front. The officers rode first class, the enlisted men were crowded in boxcars but happy to be making the trip. It was the height of summer, and everywhere women and old men and children were working in the fields. He saw ox teams but no horses. And no young men. Along the tracks, leaning on their pickaxes and shovels as they waited for the train to pass by, were hundreds of German soldiers with "PG" printed in large white letters on the backs of their green coats. In the railway station of every city they came to he saw trainload after trainload of French soldiers headed for the front, where the last great German offensive was being beaten back in the second Battle of the Marne. His own train went east, through vineyards. At Montluçon there was a stopover of several hours, and an elderly English professor showed Lieutenant Dyer and another officer about the city and then took them to the home of an aristocratic French family to meet a pupil of his, a young lady who was very anxious to hear the English spoken by Americans. After Lyons they turned south, following the Rhône Valley. Every time the train emerged from a tunnel, the men in the boxcars cheered. On the fourth

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THE FLOWER THIEF

Who watches behind curtains her landlord counting his hundred
or so jonquils, or fingering like a scout the dogwood's
five or six snipped branches, knows the fugitive's
lust for the wayward tea rose bobbing above the hedges.
She's cased all winter the sidewalk gardens. She's gone
at dusk among forsythia and lilacs, the curbside gutters

petal-clogged, the tulip trees' sprung husks pouched as gutted
fish. There the streets are littered with the blossoms of a hundred
redbuds blown and drifting like confetti after the parade's gone
by. As if she were a part of that great wedding and would
greet them at the threshold, she clips the ripest from the hedges,
and for herself a few studded golden sheaths, just a fugitive's

provisions, enough to set in jars on the leeward sills like fugitive
fires along a bluff above the sea, the camps stone-cold, gutted
by dawn, as clueless as the next, each bud anonymous, the donor hedge
in one moon phase replete. Who'll know the difference in a hundred
years or care she spends them all in rented rooms? The green wood
tears away. Her hands are pollen-stained and dewy, and gone

at last are any traces of remorse, any self-promised penance, gone
as the roses she once threw to an old matador whose fugitive

soul she thought she'd always love and, grown up, someday, would
come back to. Another year she'd stood before the gutted
cage of an orangutan, his floor a wash of how many hundred
fuchsia blossoms he'd stripped from the hydrangea hedges

within reach. Now he scooped up petals like a miser—his hedges
half blighted—then washed his face in flowers, his eyes gone
tired with wonder or forgetting deep in the scent, in one of hundreds
of northern coastal towns where winter's long and summer's fugitive.
So she runs, cradling her cache, clearing the bright gutters,
and backs along a wall out of the street light and jumps the wooden

fences laddering the terraces sentried by oaks, beechwood,
and sycamores. Tufty seeds, miles away, swarm the asphalt hedges,
and rent, exhausted blossoms funnel down the harbor gutters,
or drift, too light to sink, across the bay, like small armadas going
home from some new world. The flags go up. Out on the fugitive
horizon, the crew will not look back at us, the hundreds

waving from the shore, hundreds turning toward these gutted storefronts
by the fugitive light, our faces pale as woodbine above a hedge
of traffic. The flower in her hair grows seedy, star white. Then she's gone.

—Deborah Digges

• •

day, after emerging from a tunnel three miles long, he saw the blue water of the Mediterranean.

The population of Marseilles was so mixed that it seemed as if God had transplanted here a sample of His people from all the kingdoms of the earth. Most of the men were in uniform of some sort. The Algerian soldiers (many of them "black as tar") with their little red skullcaps and the Hindus in their turbans and loose garments were the strangest. How in such garments could they fight in the trenches? As the men of his company walked through the streets, people exclaimed, "Ah, Americans!" They were welcome in the best hotels, the best theatres, everywhere. But it was a wicked city. Sitting at a table in a sidewalk café, he saw many beautiful women who were clearly prostitutes.

No ammunition trucks were available, and so they travelled back through the same picturesque scenery until gradually it became less picturesque and the farms less well tended. At Is-sur-Tille, where there was a huge American advance-supply base, they spent the greater part of the day on a siding. That night, no lights were allowed in the railroad cars, and from this they knew they were approaching the front. The 92nd Division headquarters was now at Bourbonne-les-Bains, three hundred kilometres southeast of Paris. As Lieutenant Dyer stepped down onto the station platform, the first officers he saw were from his old Camp Funston unit. He reported to the division surgeon and was put on duty in a camp just outside the city.

During the week that his unit remained here, their lockers were taken from them, their equipment was reduced to fifty pounds, and they were issued pistols and ammunition. On the twelfth of August they left the camp in a long convoy of motortrucks, which travelled all afternoon and night and stopped the next morning in the pretty little village of Bruyères. Here they were quartered in an old barracks that turned out to be comfortable enough when put in sanitary condition. Bruyères was a railroad terminal where American and French divisions and supplies were unloaded for the front. Aside from some humiliating divisional orders, which the diary does not go into, his stay there was pleasant. In the evening he walked out on the hills beyond the town and watched the anti-aircraft guns firing at German bombers. The distant flashes of cannons were like sheet lightning on the horizon.

Toward the end of August, on a night of the full moon—though it was almost totally obscured by clouds—he sat in a crowded truck with a rifle between his knees and his eyes focussed on the dim road ahead. The convoy drove without lights, and they kept passing Army vehicles that had broken down or had slid off the road into a ditch, and infantrymen who, because of fatigue and the weight of their packs, had fallen out of the line to rest. He gave up counting the houses with their roofs gone or that were completely destroyed. The whole countryside had a look of desolation. At three o'clock in the morning, the convoy arrived at a silent and largely destroyed town. The truck he was riding in drove up an alley and stopped. He and two other officers lay down in front of a building that appeared to be intact and, using the stone doorstep for a pillow, fell asleep from exhaustion. In the morning, the occupants of the building, leaving for work, stepped over them. He got up and asked where they were and was told that it was Raon-l'Étape, in the Vosges.

For two days the American troops bivouacked in a wood, with German planes lingering high in the air above them in spite of the anti-aircraft guns. Then they were moved back to the town, and that night an enemy bomber dropped four bombs on the place where they had camped, creating terrific explosions. He was billeted at the house of a Mme. Crouvésier, whose two sons were in a prison camp in Germany. Working chiefly at night, because the Germans had occupied this area for three weeks in 1914 and knew the roads perfectly, the 317th moved ammunition of all calibres from the woods where it was hidden to four regiments of American infantry and a French artillery unit that was operating with them. The town was full of graves—in back yards, in gardens, everywhere. While he stood looking at an enemy observation balloon it suddenly went up in a fiery cloud. A German plane was brought down at Raon-l'Étape and the dead aviators were given a military funeral, which he attended.

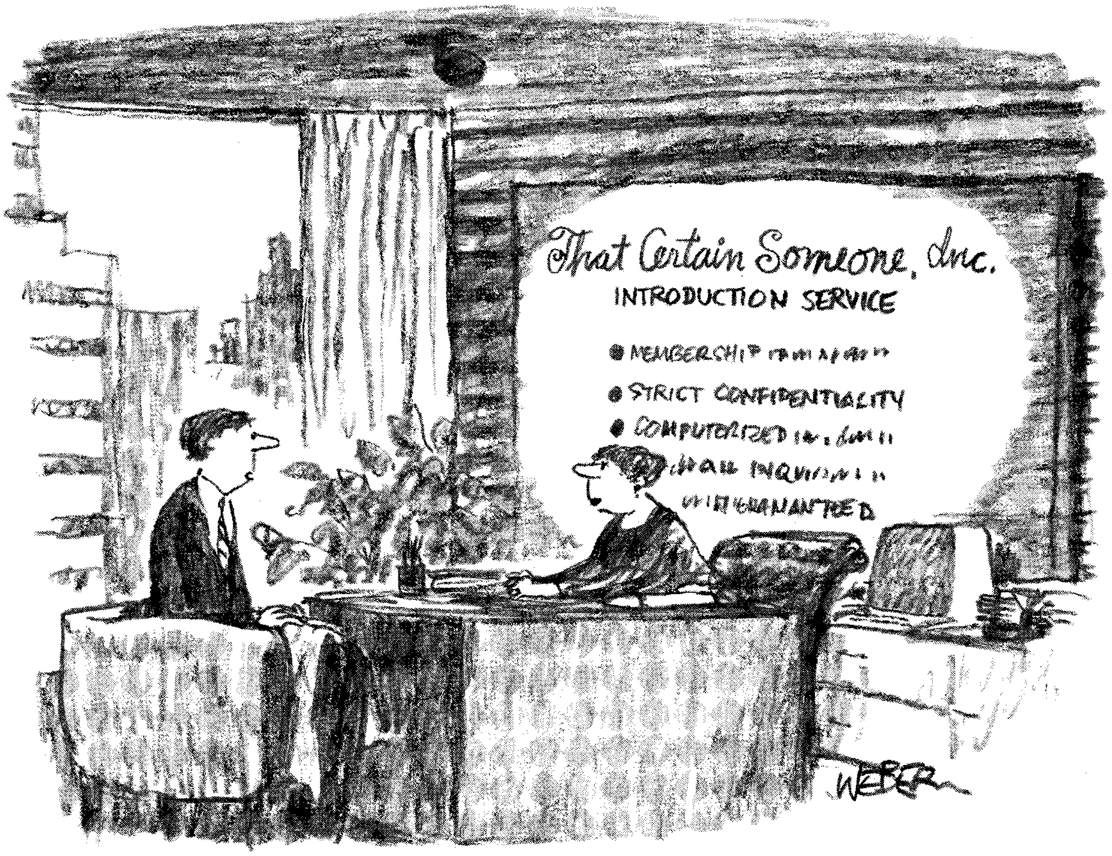
After nearly a month here, he again found himself in a convoy, which drove all day and at 11 P.M. stopped along the roadside for the night. The truck he was riding in was so crowded that he got out and slept on the ground, wrapped in his blankets, and was awakened two hours later by a downpour. He moved under the truck, but his blankets became so wet that he gave

up and moved back into the truck, and with the rain trickling down the back of his neck finished out the night.

Two days later, they reached their destination—the Argonne Forest. There were no accommodations for them, not even water to drink or to cook with, and the mud everywhere was over their shoe tops. They pitched their tents under bushes and trees to keep from being observed by the enemy airplanes constantly flying over. The companies of the 317th were detailed to handle supplies at a nearby railhead and deliver hundreds of horses to units at the front. ("While camped in this wet, filthy woods, many of our boys became ill from the dampness, cold, and exposure, thereby causing me much work and worry, caring for them.") Division headquarters issued a bulletin that Negro soldiers would be used to handle mustard-gas cases, because they were less susceptible than whites. ("Why is the Negro less susceptible to mustard gas than the whites? *No one can answer.*") On September 25th, a very heavy bombardment began, and it kept up for thirty-six hours without a stop. ("The old woods . . . trembled as if by earthquake, the flashes of the cannon lighted up the inside of our tents, and our ears were deafened.") Lieutenant Dyer went several times to the American evacuation hospital, a quarter of a mile away, and saw a continuous stream of ambulances bringing wounded soldiers to it from the front. The dead were also being brought back, on trucks, piled like cordwood and dripping blood.

They moved on, to Sainte-Menehould, forty-seven kilometres west of Verdun, and were billeted on the top floor of a French barracks. From their windows they could see the lines. The area was full of American soldiers plodding along under their heavy packs. Standing on the top of a hill, he could make out the Argonne Forest, with smoke hanging over it. Big guns were belching from all the surrounding hills. The 317th worked round the clock. With no tall trees and only one other building near it, the barracks made a fine target. ("All through the night the fighting kept up and though scared stiff and expecting to be blown to atoms at any moment I finally fell asleep.")

On the seventh of October, Companies B and C left Sainte-Menehould. The trucks drove south and east all day, in a driving rain, with a cold wind. In many places the road was camouflaged with green burlap supported on wire fences sometimes fifteen feet high and thickly interwoven with bushes and small trees. They passed through towns where not one house was standing whole and there was no longer any civilian population. A ruin next to a graveyard meant that there had been a church on this spot. Even the grass was burned up. ("At 5 P.M. we reached the city of Commercy, where we had orders to spend the night. We were taken to a French barracks where there were fairly good quarters for officers and men. We had just gotten comfortably located in the building, quite glad to get out of the inclement weather, and were preparing to eat, when another order came for the ammunition train to move on. . . . The rain fell and the wind blew and I sat on an open truck helping the driver watch the road to prevent running over an embankment, which would probably have meant our death. . . . All night long we travelled on, wondering what our destination would be and why we should be ordered to move on such a night.") At four in the morning, the convoy stopped in the village of Belleville. Cold, wet, and hungry, he got



"My preference is for someone who's afraid of closeness, like me."

• •

down and stomped on the ground hoping to generate a little body heat. At daybreak a feed cart came by and the driver pitched them a few steaks left over from the breakfast of a labor battalion.

Belleville was so protected by the surrounding hills that the shells from the enemy guns at Metz almost never reached it. Lieutenant Dyer and another lieutenant were billeted in the ancient, dilapidated house of an elderly French couple. The officers' second-floor room had one small window. On the walls and rafters were a few traces of whitewash. There was a fireplace and two immense wardrobes. Over their heads was a loft full of straw, in which rats, mice, and birds nested. Sometimes their frisking sent chaff down on the faces of the two men. The beds were good. Lying in his, Lieutenant Dyer listened to the sound of the German planes overhead and tried to gauge, by the whine of a falling shell, whether the explosion would be a safe distance away.

He set up his infirmary in a small electrical plant. Because of the constant cold and rainy weather, there was a great deal of sickness among the colored troops. (Not once does he speak of what in America was called "the Spanish Flu," but it was that, undoubtedly, that the men in his company were coming down with.)

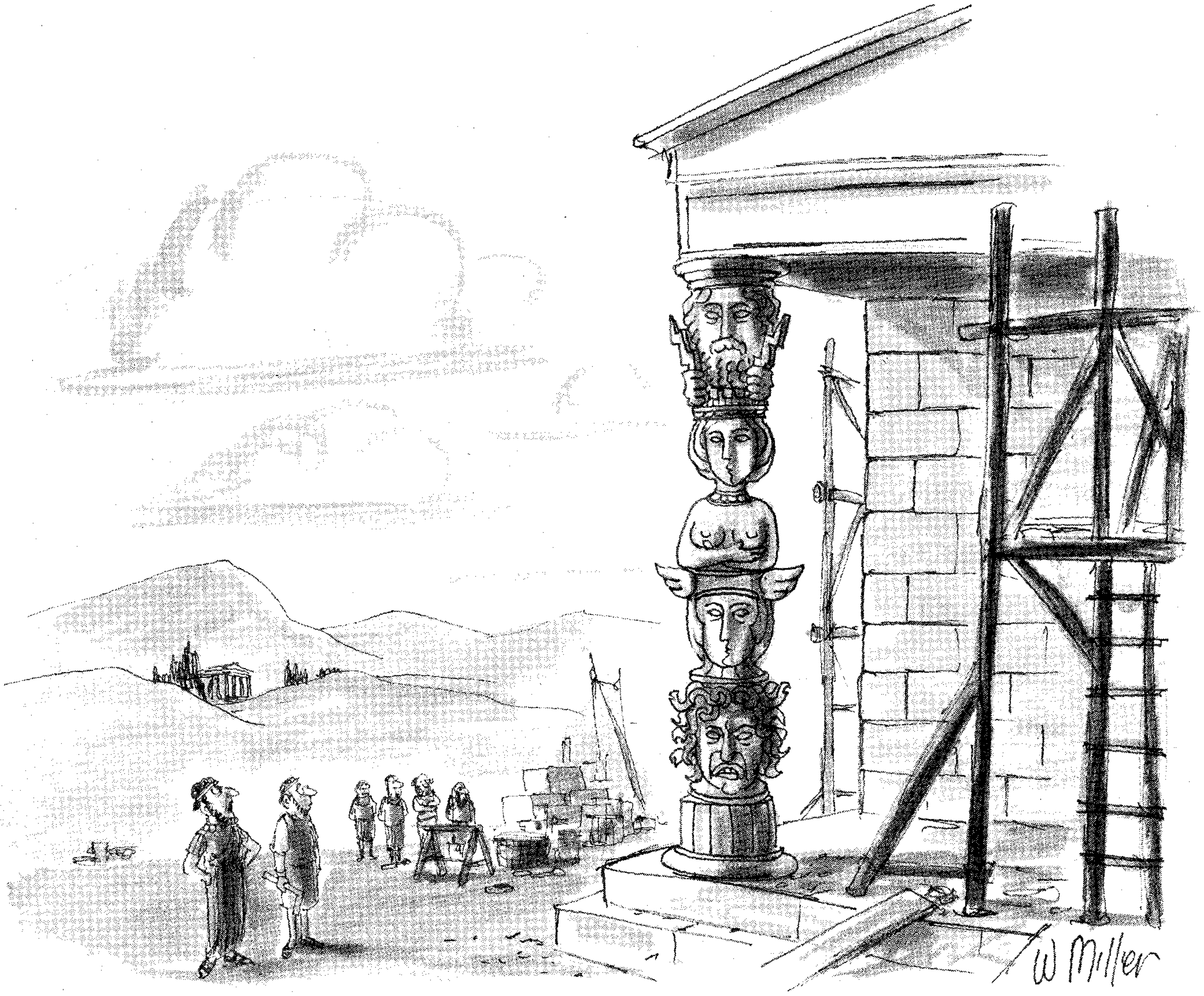
Companies A, D, E, F, and G and their artillery, in training in the South of France since July, arrived in Belleville. ("Major Howard, my commanding officer from whom I had been separated about four months, called to see me . . . and complimented me on my good work, saying he had seen the Division Surgeon and not one complaint was made against me. During the whole month of October we labored on, hearing much talk of peace and were very anxious for the final drive, which would end forever Autocracy and give Democracy the right to reign. On the morning of November 8th, however, while we were in the midst of our activities, a terrible thing occurred at Belleville . . . A colored boy who had been convicted of rape in August was hanged or lynched in an open field not far from my infirmary. The execution was a military order, but so openly and poorly carried out that it was rightly termed a lynching.")

The next day, the drive against Metz began, and two days later, while tremendous barrages were being laid down by the artillery in support of the infantries' advances, the news reached them that Germany had signed an armistice. As everywhere else in the Western world, bells rang, whistles blew, people shouted for joy.

On December 6th, he and another officer climbed into a truck and after a two-hour ride through no man's land arrived in Metz. He found it untouched by the fighting and the most beautiful city he had seen in France. The buildings were modern; the streets were wide and well paved and lighted with gas or electricity; there were streetcars riding up and down. But the people were cold and unfriendly to them, and spoke German mostly, and it was clear from the way a pack of children followed them in the street that they had never seen a Negro before.

On the night of December 15th, he was awakened by the orderly boy. In a heavy fog, a passenger train from Metz had plowed into a troop train full of happy French soldiers returning home from the front. It was a dreadful sight. The cars were telescoped and splintered, and the bodies of the dead and dying were pinned under the wreckage. The rest of the night he dressed wounds and put splints on broken arms and legs.

Three days later, the 317th began to leave Belleville. Now on foot, now in trucks or trains, they moved westward toward their port of embarkation. Sometimes he slept on straw, in dirty makeshift buildings that had been occupied by other soldiers before them



"What an absurd concept. Remove it!"

• •

and were infested with lice. For two days and nights he rode in a crowded railway coach with the rain dripping down on him from a leak in the ceiling. On Christmas Eve, in the ancient village of Domfront, in Normandy, the medical unit stood about in the rain and snow until 3 A.M., waiting to be billeted by a captain who, it turned out, had forgotten about them. Shivering in the cold, he remembered the Biblical text: *Foxes have holes and the fowls of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*

The people of Domfront were extremely hospitable, and the colored troops reciprocated by being on their best behavior. He was kept busy inspecting them daily for vermin and acute infections, but he found time to visit the places of historical interest and had his picture taken at the foot of the castle wall. Then he himself came down with influenza and had to be looked after by the men of his medical corps.

Late in January, his unit was ordered to proceed to the delousing station at Le Mans. The weather was cold, and there was a light snow on the ground. They reached Le Mans at eleven o'clock at night, after a twelve-hour ride. When he climbed down out of the truck, he had difficulty walking. He took off his boots and discovered that his feet were frozen. ("For a week thereafter, my feet were so swollen and blistered that I was unable to wear a shoe or leave my quarters.") During the two weeks he spent at the delousing camp he ran into several boys from Springfield that he knew. They had seen hard service with the 8th Illinois Infantry and showed it.

The unit made its final train journey from Le Mans to Brest, where thousands of soldiers were now crowded into the area around the port. The barracks were long wooden shacks with a hall running through the middle and small rooms opening off it. The only heat came from two stoves, one at either end of the hall. ("The weather was extremely damp and chilly at Brest, the raw wind off the ocean penetrating to the marrow.") There was more sickness.

On the morning of February 22nd, the 317th marched to the port. They had been informed by a bulletin from headquarters that if there was any disorder in the ranks they would be sent back to camp and detained indefinitely. Their packs uniformly rolled, their guns and shoes polished, they moved in utter silence, like a funeral

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procession. The Aquitania rode at anchor in the harbor, and they were loaded onto small barges and ferried out to it. Lieutenant Dyer's cabin had mahogany fittings and a private bathroom. There were taps for fresh water and salt water, and the soap did not smell of disinfectant. While he was in the tub soaking, the room began to rock, and he realized that they had put out to sea. There is more, but why not leave him there, as lighthearted as he was probably ever going to be.

III

OF Dr. Dyer's roughly forty years of medical practice in Kansas City there is no record that I know of. The pattern of his days must have been regular and consistent. I picture him with a stethoscope in the pocket of his white coat and a covey of internes crowding around him.

In 1946, Hugh Davis, who was then living in California and an architect, came with his wife to Lincoln for a family visit. While he was there, he got Dr. Dyer's address and wrote to him to say that they would be going through Kansas City with a stopover of several hours and would like to see him. The answer was an invitation to dinner. There had been no communication between them for a good many years. The walls of the Dyers' Kansas City apartment were covered with Bessie Dyer's paintings, which the Davises liked very much. She was self-taught, with the help of a book that she got from the public library. They all sat down to a full Thanksgiving dinner, though actually Thanksgiving was about ten days away. And the friendship simply picked up where it had left off.

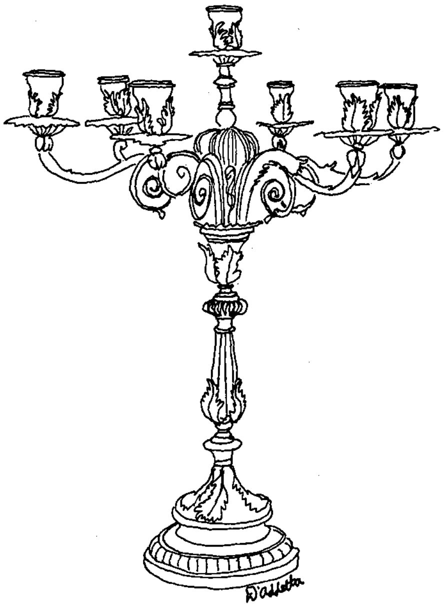
Hugh Davis's widow let me see a few of Dr. Dyer's letters to him written between 1955 and 1957. They are about politics (he was an ardent Republican), the hydrogen bomb, various international crises, a projected high-school reunion that never took place, his wife's delicate health, and—as one would expect of any regular correspondence—the weather. They are signed "Your friend, Billie Dyer." In each letter there is some mention of his professional activity—never more than a sentence, as a rule; taken together they give a very good picture of a man working himself to death.

In January, 1956, at which time he was seventy years old, he wrote, "I suppose I should apologize for not having written you sooner but believe it or not, I am now working harder and with longer hours than ever before. Silly, you say, well I quite agree but the occasion is this. In the last four months I have been put on the staffs of three of the major hospitals in our city. I thought at first it was an honor but with the increase in activities which such appointments entail, my work has increased twofold. Since it is the first time that one of my race has had such appointments, I have been working diligently to make good, thereby keeping those doors open." He was still acting as a surgeon for the Santa Fe Railroad, and also for the Kansas City, Kansas, police department.

Three months later he wrote, "Since I have taken on new hospital assignments I have been working much too hard. I was in Chicago this week three days attending the Convention of American Association of Railway Surgeons and derived great benefit from the lectures and demonstrations on recent advances in medicine and surgery."

In June he spent a couple of weeks in the wilds of Minnesota fishing and had a glorious time, though the fishing was poor. In August he wrote, "I am still working as hard as ever altho my physical resistance is not what it used to be & I find I must resort to more frequent short periods of rest."

The letter he wrote in November is largely about the suppression of the Hungarian uprising: "My heart goes out to those people. I was in France in the First World War & I saw refugees going down the roads with a little cart pulled by a donkey & all of their earthly possessions piled high on it. They had been driven from their homes by the advancing German Armies & it was a pitiful sight to behold." He also mentions the fact that the vision in his right eye is somewhat impaired because of a small cataract, and adds, "I am still working at a tremendous pace but realize that I must soon slow down."



In March of the following year he wrote, "I hardly have time to breathe. Indeed I know that at my age I should not be trying such a pace but having broken thru a barrier which was denied me so many years . . ."

In July he wrote, "I too am having my troubles with a nervous dermatitis which all of the skin specialists tell me is due to overwork. . . . I am planning on spending a couple of weeks on the lakes in northern Minnesota for I am very tired and need a rest."

And in August: "I will be 71 years old the 29th of this month and am in fairly good health for an old man of my years. I therefore thank the good Lord for His blessings. . . . I thought I would get out to California this summer but I had to buy a new car, so will have to defer my visit another year. . . . I agree with you that Ike has been a little wishy washy since he has been in the White House. It seems that he speaks softly but does not carry the big stick like Teddy Roosevelt once did. Hugh I shall never forget the political rallies and torchlight processions they had in Lincoln when we were boys. We don't see anything like that any more, and when the circuses came to town with their big parades. How I pity the generations of kids today, who are denied such thrills. Remember the old swimming hole in Kickapoo Creek where we used to swim naked and have so much fun. Hugh those were the days."

In January there was a notice in the Lincoln *Evening Courier:* "Dr. William Dyer, a native of Lincoln, was found dead in his car after an automobile accident at Kansas City, Kan., Tuesday morning. He apparently suffered a heart attack while driving."

THERE have been at least three histories of Logan County. The first was published in 1878 by a firm that went through the state doing one county after another. It has portrait engravings and brief biographies of the

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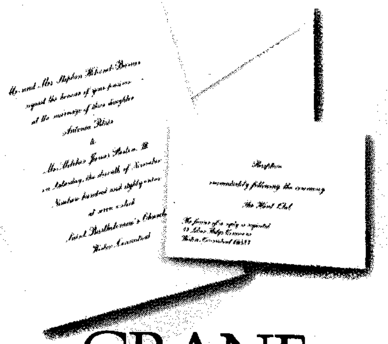

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leading citizens, for which they must have paid something. The style is a little like First and Second Chronicles: "Michael and Abram Mann, John Jessee and Thomas Sr., Lucas and Samuel Myers were from Ohio and are now in their graves." Many natural wonders that the early settlers remembered found their way into this book—prairie fires so numerous that at night they lighted up the whole circuit of the horizon. And mirages. Also extreme hardships—the ague, caused by hunting their horses in the wet grass, and a drop in the temperature so great and so sudden, on a rainy December afternoon in 1836, that men on horseback were frozen to the saddle. And primitive artifacts, such as a door with wooden hinges, a wooden lock, and a buckskin drawstring.

Another history, published in 1911, was the work of a local man and is overburdened with statistics. The most recent is a large book—nine by twelve —heavy to hold in the hand and bound in red Leatherette. The likeness of Abraham Lincoln is on the cover, embossed in gold, as if somewhere in the Afterlife his tall shade had encountered King Midas. There are hundreds of photographs of people I don't know and never heard of, which is not to be wondered at since we moved away from Lincoln in 1923, when I was fourteen years old.

Someone who had never lived there might conclude from this book that the town had no Negroes now or ever. Except for the group pictures of the Lincoln College athletic teams, in which here and there a dark face appears among the lighter ones, there are no photographs of black men and women. And though there are many pictures of white churches of one denomination or another, there is no picture of the African Methodist Episcopal Church—only a column of text, in which the buildings it occupied and the ministers who served it are listed. And these sentences: "Mr. Arian [surely Aaron misremembered?] Dyer and wife Harriet moved here from Springfield, Illinois, in 1874. . . . The sinners in Lincoln found the hope in Christ and joined the church. Among them were Alfred Dyer and wife Laura. . . ."

I go through the book looking for the names that figured so prominently in the conversation of my elders and find almost none. And realize that the place to look for them is the cemetery. The past is always being plowed under. There is a page of pictures of the centennial parade, but nowhere are the names of the Ten Most Distinguished Men called to mind. What is one to think if not that the town, after celebrating its hundredth birthday, was done with history and its past, and ready to live, like the rest of America, in a perpetual present?

In the index I found "Dyer, William, 90, 202." Both references turned out to be concerned with a white man of that name. —William Maxwell

• •

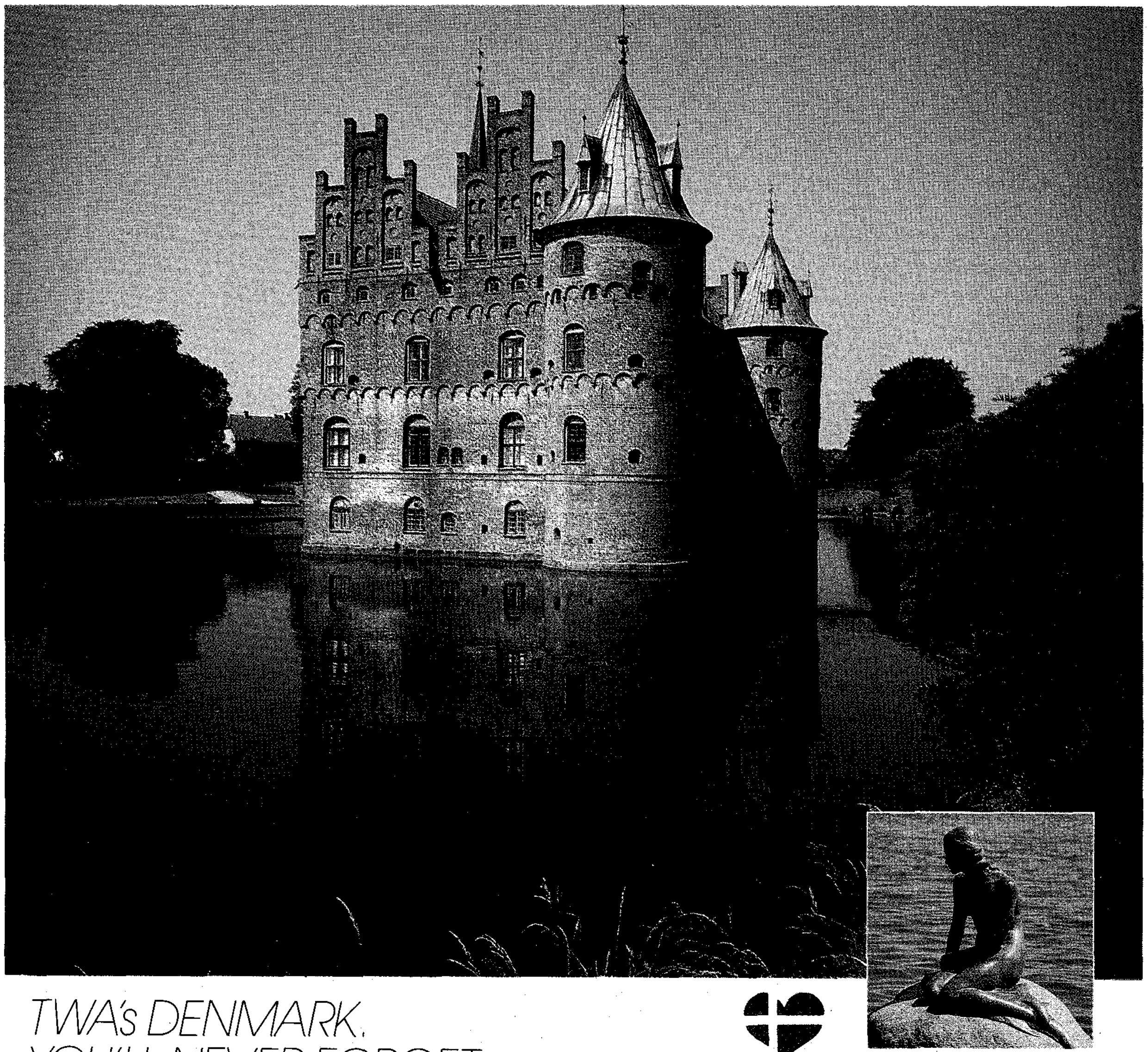
LONELINESS IN THE CITY

Like a stroll through a midnight crowd,
a crowd of stones before one, like a congeries
of stones with eyes, or eyes without feeling,
like eyes that'll shape more stones in neon, or waves
of flickering shop windows, pulsations of color,
or millionaires without names, like wearying
Buddhas, or panhandlers with too many lives,
lives unused, or used up, or multiple
car signals, unalterable city echoes,
or patrolmen, on horseback, deftly unravelling
worn flags, timepieces of Troy, or nowhere.

Then a stranger, his face gaunt, and dimmed
by the rain, your face in his, then a woman,
her face, pink and still young, on a video screen,
who knows that she'll witness anything, any scrap
of paper, to release us all from this midnight stroll
through the crowd, this aquarium of little fish
in the moonlight, each one darker than the next.

—Robert Mazzocco

WE INVENTED ONCE UPON A TIME.



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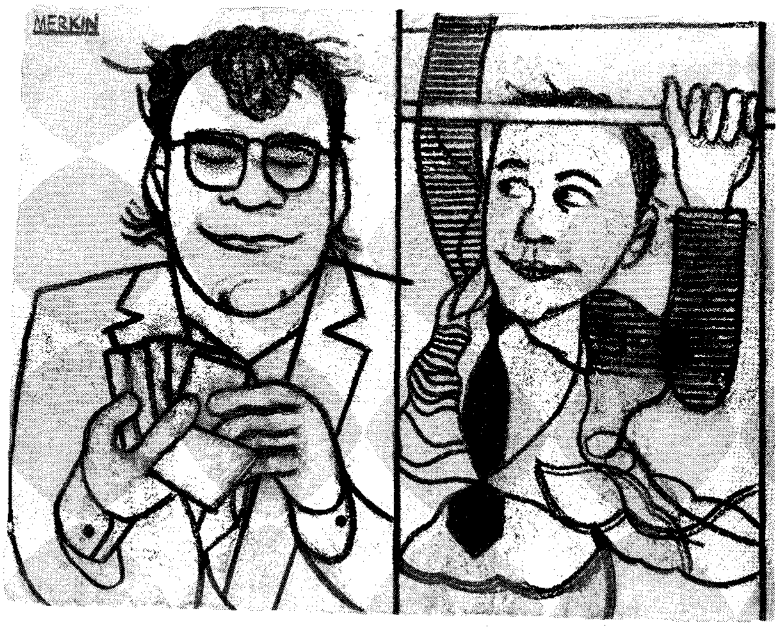

Penn and Teller

I WAS in a Chinese restaurant in Philadelphia asking Wier Chrisemer about the origins of the Othmar Schoeck Memorial Society for the Preservation of Unusual and Disgusting Music. Chrisemer is the man to talk to about Othmar Schoeck. It was Chrisemer, after all, who brought Schoeck's name to the attention of the general public, at least the general public of a portion of western Massachusetts. This was in 1970, when Chrisemer, then an Amherst College music major, was browsing in the record collection of the college radio station and came across an album of Schoeck's music called "Lebendig Begraben," or "Buried Alive." Of such seemingly chance encounters, I reminded Chrisemer, is history made.

Listening to the album back then, Chrisemer had a strong suspicion why the music of Othmar Schoeck, a Swiss composer who died in 1957, was not familiar to him. "It was awful," he told me. "It had no redeeming merit." Chrisemer was also struck by the fact that Othmar Schoeck, whose picture was on the front of the album, could have been picked out of a large crowd as a Swiss composer of music that made you long for intermission: "He was in the standard pose of the composer leaning on his hand, but he had a rather fleshy face, and some of the flesh was hanging over the tops of his fingers." Thus doubly inspired, Chrisemer decided that it would be appropriate to try to build Othmar Schoeck a cult following. When I was in college, I could have seen the logic in that myself. I think I can still see the logic in that.

Chrisemer figured that the core of Schoeck's celebration would be two or three concerts a year at Amherst sponsored by the Othmar Schoeck Memorial Society for the Preservation of Unusual and Disgusting Music. The concerts did not go so far as to include any works by Othmar Schoeck. The pieces performed tended to be what Chrisemer describes as "arrangements of standard classical chestnuts for different instruments"—Beethoven's Ninth for electric piano, prepared piano, saxophones, trash-can lids, recorders, electric bass guitar, nose flute, slide whistle, and chorus of four, for instance, or a Sousa march for a Baroque ensemble of recorder, harpsichord, cello continuo, and krummhorn. Chrisemer was serious about music—he abhorred the notion of basing humor on wrong notes—and eyewitnesses to Othmar Schoeck concerts have assured me that the most astonishing aspect of the arrangements was that they could strike a sympathetic ear as not simply funny but, somehow, just right.

In all but musical terms, the concerts were strongly Schoeckian. The program bore the logo of the Society, featuring a coffin to represent Schoeck's death in an avalanche—the circumstances of the composer's demise having been one of the embellishments Chrisemer contributed to a life that seemed a bit conventional for a cult hero. The program also included the Society's motto—a German poem that went "*Sehen wir Haufen von Hundedreck, wir denken an dir, Othmar Schoeck*," which Chrisemer translates as "Wherever we see piles of doggie-doo, O Othmar Schoeck, we think of you." Chrisemer even went to the trouble of picking up a knockwurst at the Amherst dining hall before the first concert, keeping it in a drawer for longer than anyone has a right to keep a knockwurst in a drawer, and declaring it the Othmar Schoeck Memorial Knockwurst. At concerts, it was displayed in a separate room—resting in a custom-built case and guarded by a man who wore what looked very much like the uniform of an officer in the United States Coast Guard.

"In fact, I still have the Othmar Schoeck Memorial Knockwurst," Chrisemer said that evening at dinner.

I calculated that the knockwurst would be about eighteen years old. "How does it look?" I asked.

"About the same," Chrisemer said.

Running along with the musical numbers in an Othmar Schoeck concert were various "bits of business"—often, Chrisemer cheerfully admits, based on jokes that were not immediately comprehensible to most of those in the audience. In the final year of the concerts, when Chrisemer had graduated and was working in a stereo store in nearby Greenfield, Massachusetts, the bits included an extremely tall teenager riding across the stage on a unicycle as part of Chrisemer's interpretation of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The unicyclist was someone Chrisemer had met at the stereo store—a recent graduate of Greenfield High School named Penn Jillette, who had completed his higher education at the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Clown College. Jillette also participated in the playing of "The

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"Well, the children are grown up, married, divorced, and remarried. I guess our job is done."

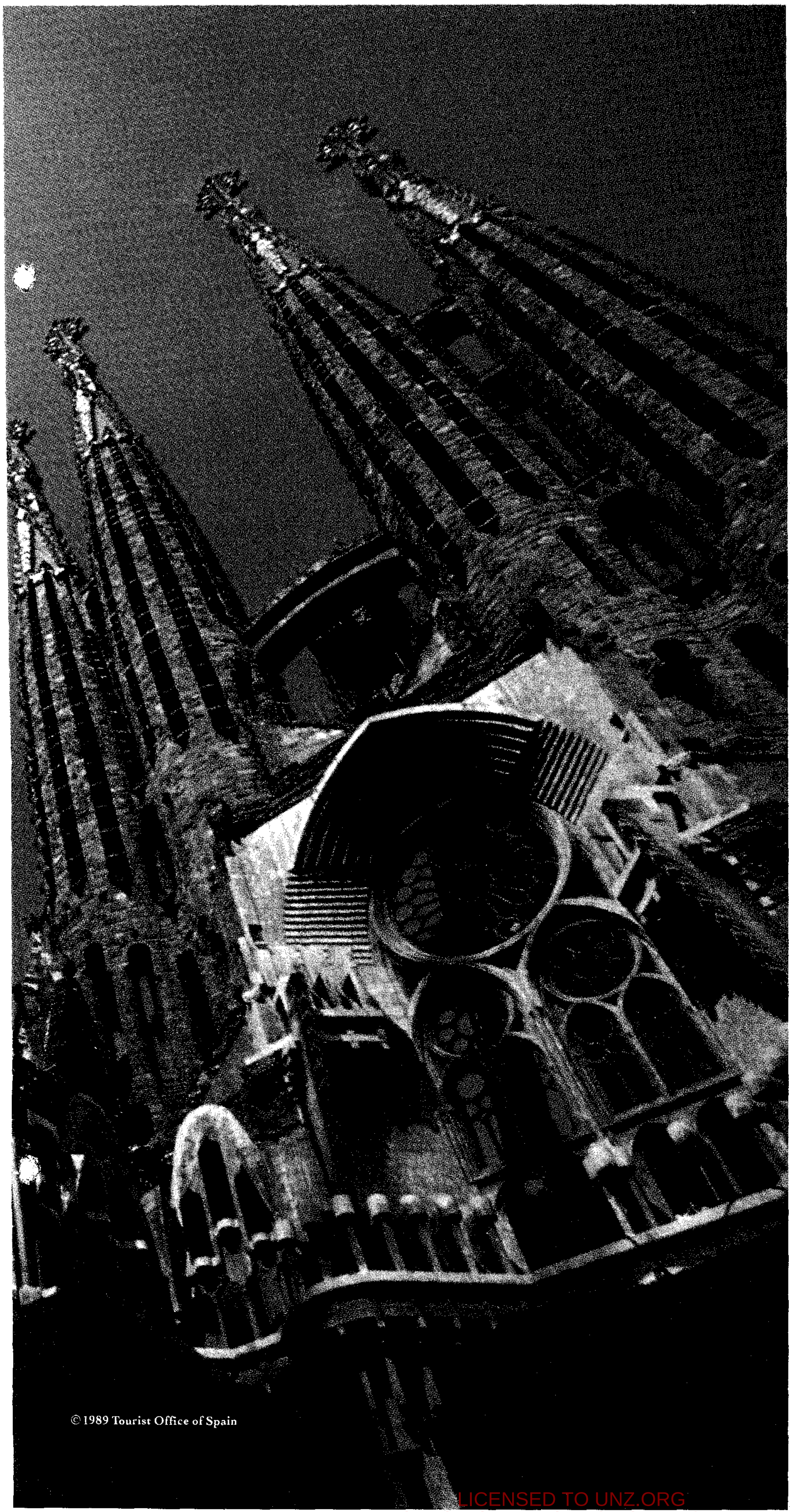
Star-Spangled Banner" by juggling some balls above a large bass drum and letting one drop onto the drum on the appropriate beat: "Oh, say can you see [BOOM] by the dawn's early light [BOOM] . . ."

One of the people who had helped with the staging of that concert was a close Amherst friend of Chrisemer's who was by then teaching high-school Latin in New Jersey. Even as a college magician doing a silent and rather arty act at fraternity parties, he had taken to using only his last name—Teller. (The act was silent partly as a means of deflecting hecklers and partly as a means of increasing its artiness.) In the lobby at intermission, the silent Teller, outfitted with a cane and dark glasses, sold Othmar Schoeck pencils.

It was the presence of Penn Jillette and Teller that had piqued my curiosity about the Othmar Schoeck concerts. Eventually, the two of them teamed up with Wier Chrisemer to form "The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society"—a show that blended Teller's magic tricks and Jillette's juggling and Chrisemer's odd musical arrangements into an evening of neo-Schoeckian humor. Eventually, "The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society" transformed itself, without Chrisemer, into a theatrical performance called "Penn & Teller," which had successful runs Off Broadway and on, and is now in Chicago on national tour. It's a performance that critics find so difficult to describe that the Obie it won when it was Off Broadway was given to Penn and Teller for "whatever it is they do." Trying to describe a show that somehow presents carnival stunts and magic tricks in a way that is funny and menacing at the same time, critics often fall back on the description of the principals which Penn himself offers at the beginning of the evening—"a couple of eccentric guys who have learned to do a few cool things." Toward the end of the evening, Penn only adds to the confusion by saying, "The question we want you to ask yourself is not how we do these tricks but why we do them." But the question that I wanted to ask—and the reason I was talking history with Wier Chrisemer in a Chinese restaurant in Philadelphia—was neither of those. It was "How did you guys get that way?"

LIKE most occasional Off Broadway ticket buyers, I am not drawn to magic acts. Until I ran across Penn and Teller, my only experience with magicians in some years had been a brief sidewalk encounter during which I asked Harry Blackstone, Jr., to turn my younger daughter, Sarah, into an elephant. The incident involving Blackstone took place a few years ago, when Sarah was twelve or thirteen. One spring afternoon, we happened to be standing in front of our house when a taxi stopped and Harry Blackstone, Jr., emerged. He was visiting a neighbor of ours named Charles Reynolds, who is a producer of magic effects, a scholar of magic, and a consultant on magic to productions ranging from Broadway musicals to touring rock acts. Charles, who had come out to greet his guest, introduced us. Even without being a close follower of the magic game, I knew that Harry Blackstone, Jr., is regarded as one of the finest magicians in the country—the leading exemplar of the formal tradition of grand illusion—so it seemed natural to ask him for a real stunner. Blackstone declined to turn Sarah into an elephant—"Either he couldn't or he wouldn't," I've always said in my carefully balanced account of the incident—but he declined with great aplomb, pointing out to me that an elephant is one of the few beasts that require more upkeep than a teen-ager.

I admire the skill of a first-rank magician like Blackstone, but in general I'm not someone who is entertained by being astounded. Also, a lot of magicians have in common with a lot of people in children's theatre the habit of performing with the sort of broad gesture that seems based on the assumption that the entire audience is one rather slow-witted person in the back row. When "Penn & Teller" first opened in New York, in 1985, at a small Off Broadway house called the Westside Arts, I didn't rush right over. I had heard vaguely that Penn and Teller were magicians, and I had further heard that one of them didn't speak—a report leaving open the dread possibility that he was a mime. It's no secret by now that I would subject myself to a thousand hours of American Legion Hall magicians rather than endure ten minutes in the presence of the world's most accomplished mime. In my less restrained moments, I have gone so far as to suggest that people performing mime in public be subject to citizen's arrest, on the theory that the normal First Amendment protection of free speech has in effect been waived by someone who has for-



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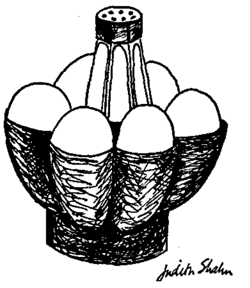
mally adopted a policy of not speaking.

I was finally lured to the Westside Arts by the reviews—a collection of all-out raves. (In this magazine Edith Oliver called her notice "more fan letter than review.") Some of the critics mentioned the dark, and even terrifying, side of the show. It begins with Teller suspended upside down in a straitjacket over a bed of spikes; it ends up with Penn on a darkened stage eating fire and talking about how at the Franklin County Fair he always felt himself drawn into the sideshow tent to see the freaks and fire-eaters while his high-school buddies waited outside. But what attracted me was the general agreement that Penn and Teller were terribly funny. In my experience, a funny magician is so rare that an innovative entrepreneur might be able to attract a crowd simply by announcing that he had one on the premises, in the way those roadside zoos next to filling stations along Route 66 used to put out signs saying "See Albino Raccoon."

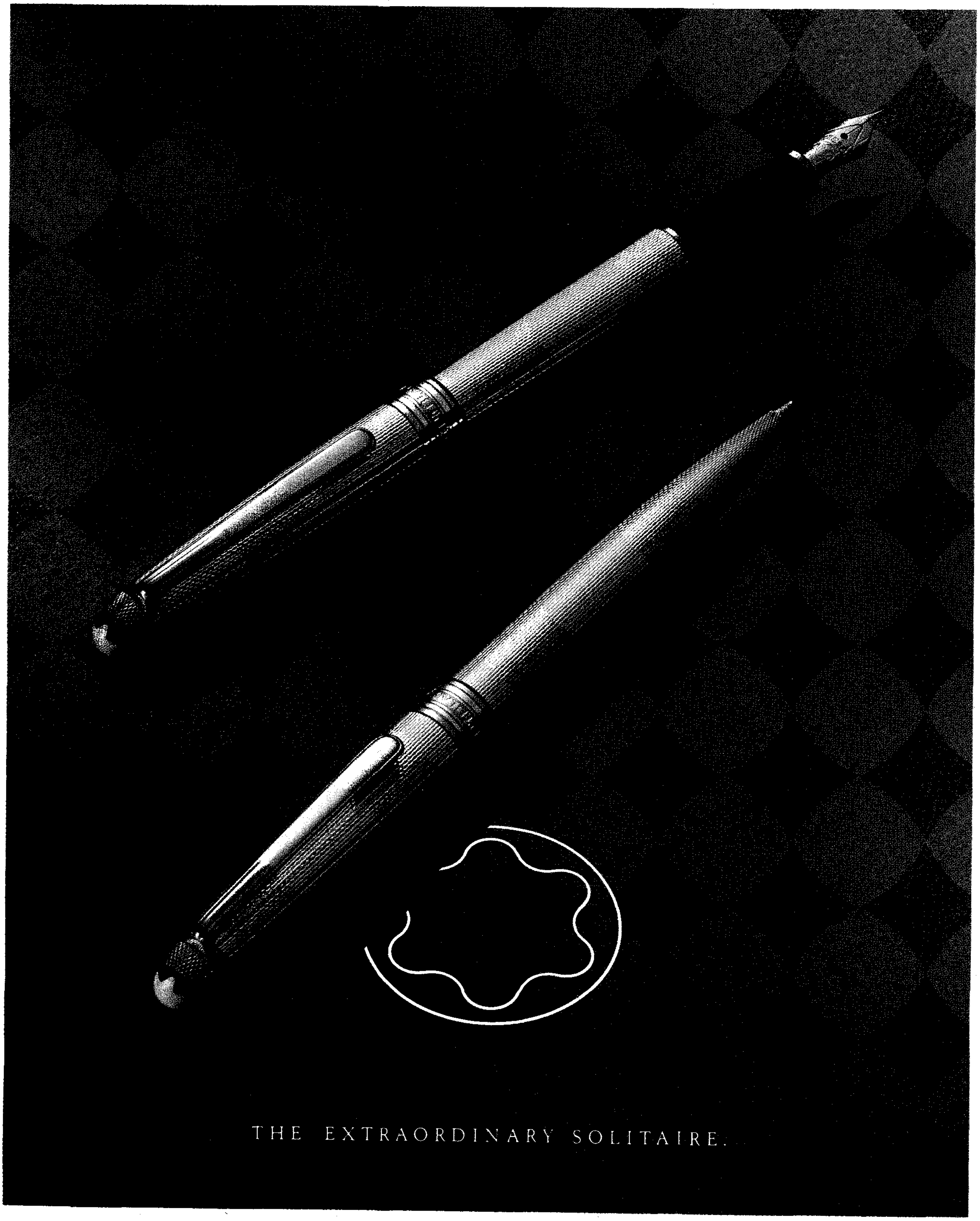


Like most people seeing Penn and Teller for the first time, I was struck by their appearance. Both of them were dressed in gray business suits and red ties. Penn is six feet six, nearly a foot taller than his partner, and happens to be that rare person to whom the word "shambling" can be appropriately applied—although he also crosses the stage at times in a style of locomotion he describes, quite accurately, as grooving. His hairdo included a sort of frizzy ponytail and another fistful of hair tumbling over his forehead. He wore clear polish on all but one fingernail, and that one was painted red. Penn referred to neither his hair nor his fingernail during the act, but when the subject of his being asked to cut his hair for a movie role came up a year or so later—in an interview with Kevin Kelly, of the Boston *Globe*—he offered a comment on his appearance that I think of as typical of his showier offstage remarks: "Hey! All I care about is my hair and fingernails! Everything else is just affectation." A couple of years after that, I happened to be standing next to Penn while he was chatting with members of the audience during intermission—chatting with the audience during intermission is routine for Penn and Teller, as is hawking T-shirts in the lobby after the show—and a man who appeared to be just a shade over five feet tall asked him directly what the significance of having one red fingernail was. Penn looked down at the man and said, in the same cheerful voice he had used to answer other inquiries, "It means I once killed a man for asking personal questions."

After I saw that first performance, it occurred to me that Penn's fingernail was one of the few subjects he didn't get around to onstage. The words just poured out of him—a constant, aggressive, consciously hip, often overbearing, occasionally hostile flow that sometimes sounded like the language of a man on the street corner up to no good and sometimes like the language of the world's leading academic authority on Run D.M.C. Teller, on the other hand, said virtually nothing except what he said behind his hand as the voice of a creature called MOFO, the Psychic Gorilla. But he was no mime. He was simply a subtly expressive man who didn't seem to feel the need to say anything. He was definitely a magician. In one elegant number, unlike anything I'd ever seen, he silently dismantled a rose by cutting away at the shadow cast on a screen behind it. In another number, he swallowed a hundred embroidery needles, a few dozen at a time, topped them off with some thread, and then pulled out of his mouth a thread glistening with needles. The swallowing of each batch of needles produced a series of squirms and grimaces that I can describe only as high peristaltic drama. For me, the expression signalling that the needles had reached their destination—an expression part triumph, part blissful relief—was the high point of the show. I have seen Teller swallow needles any number of times since, and I have laughed out loud at that expression every single time.

The show also included numbers that were built on such magic effects as levitating a volunteer from the audience and guessing the card that someone had chosen from the deck, but it didn't feel like a magic show—and not simply because Penn announced explicitly at the beginning of the evening that the audience would not be seeing the sort of magic associated with "some greasy guy in a tux with a lot of birds." For one thing, the show avoided the "make-believe," as magicians sometimes call it, that what was taking place was magical—the make-believe advanced by the magician who ends each trick by drawing attention to the miraculously empty cage or the miraculously unsawed-up assistant with what Penn sometimes calls "Vanna White hand gestures." Explaining toward the end of the evening that everything in the show is a trick, Penn said, "That woman we had floating up in the air, she wasn't hypnotized. You want to try that at home, get a couple of chairs, clear your mind, study Zen, and *you'll break your ass!*" Penn's version of "Abracadabra!" was a muttered "Now I give the cards another false cut." He referred to magic effects not as wonders but as cons or swindles. Early in the show, he and Teller did the traditional cups-and-balls trick with clear-plastic cups and a running commentary on precisely how the trick was being done—although after seeing that demonstration several times about all I know about the cups-and-balls trick is that I wouldn't have the manual dexterity to do it.

Penn and Teller had a relationship with the audience that seemed to me less characteristic of magicians than of street performers—which they both once were. They treated the crowd with the cheeky familiarity of some itinerant juggler who shares with those gathered around him the unspoken understanding that at the end of the act he will not only ask for donations but also make fun of them for not donating enough. Street performers tend to include the crowd in a commentary on the performance that becomes a central part of the performance. Carrying that attitude to the Westside Arts meant that the Penn and Teller show was partly about being at a show. "Is it your birthday or anniversary or anything?" Penn asked one volunteer from the audience, who had already testified that he knew nobody connected to the show. "What I'm getting at, Joe, is there any reason that one of your wacky, wild, zippy, zany friends—and I know you've got 'em, Joe—any reason why them friends would have hired two hundred and forty-three unemployed Equity actors to sit in these seats and *act* like they're watching a show just to blow your mind, freak you out, mess with that gray matter? Is it pos-



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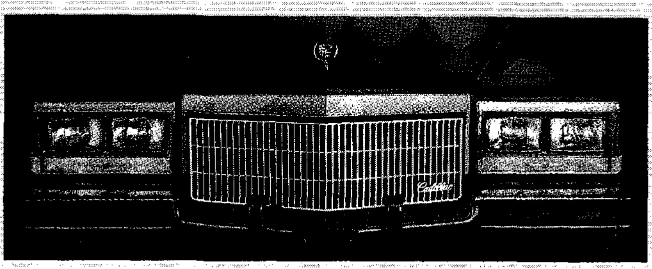

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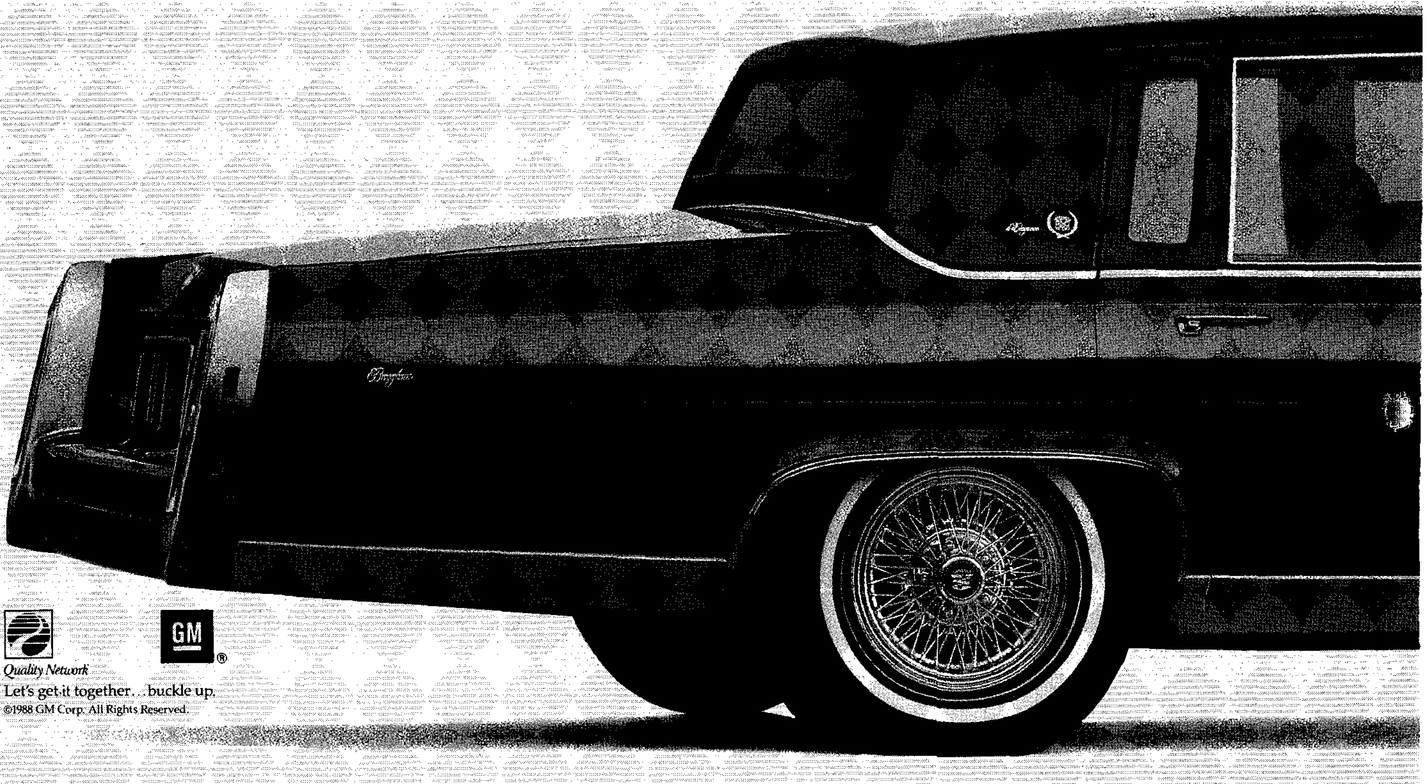

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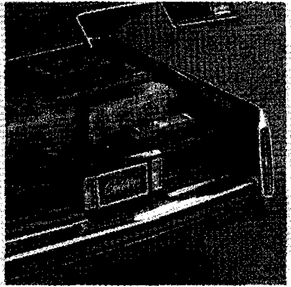

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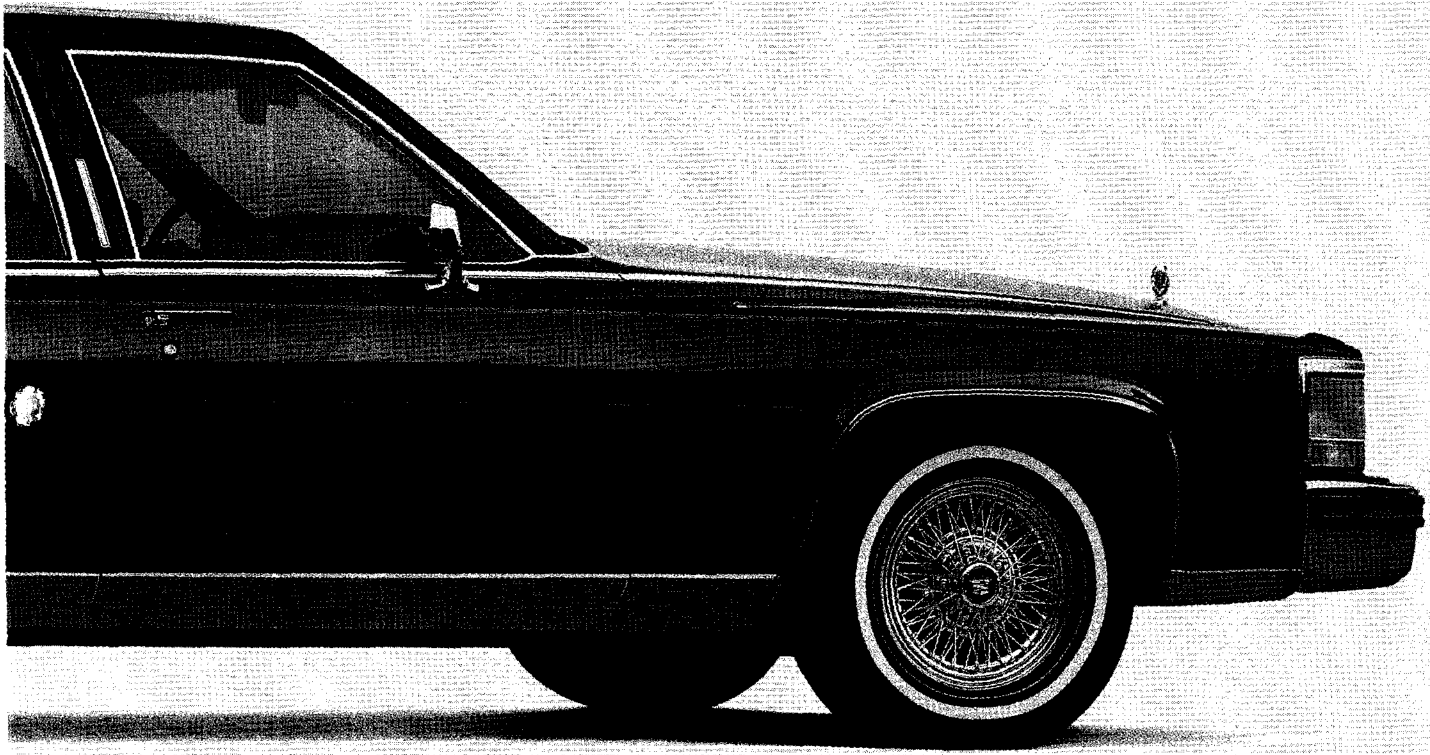

sible you're the only one here that bought a ticket and everyone else is *cast*? No wonder we're always sold out, Joe: it's *one ticket!*"

A few months after I saw "Penn & Teller" at the Westside Arts, I had occasion to meet both Penn and Teller. They became involved in an educational film that my wife co-produced. Offstage, they seemed more or less consistent with their roles in the show. Teller talked, of course—lucidly, but not at length. Penn talked at great length, and sometimes lucidly. They were both analytical; it was obvious that their act, which seemed so free-wheeling, had been thought through to the tiniest detail. The educational film was about how artists create the illusion of depth on a flat surface, and Teller came up with a remarkable number of entertaining ways to demonstrate that phenomenon. Sarah met Penn and Teller, and thought they were both cool, although Penn made it clear that he found her taste in rock music a bit tame.

BEFORE going any further, I'm afraid I have to report that Penn was once caught deflating his résumé. It's not an infraction you come across much these days, but Penn is an unusual sort of guy. This came about because of the great pleasure Penn takes in describing the total rebel he was as a high-school student—a walking disruption, who was a lot more interested in playing punk-rock music and flaunting his long hair than he was in handing in the assigned homework. Describing his teen-age years to Kevin Kelly, of the *Globe*, in 1986, Penn said that he had been kicked out of Greenfield High School. Kelly phoned Edward Jones, the principal of Greenfield High School, who told him that Penn had graduated at the normal time with good marks. Penn just shook his head when I reminded him of the incident. "It was the greatest day in Ed Jones's life," he said. "He got his name in the *Globe* and he got to call me a liar at the same time."

Penn is not exactly a liar, but he is not absolutely wed to the facts of a story if they interfere with the general theme. The general theme of stories he tells about life in Greenfield is his rebelliousness, and he likes to begin those stories with phrases like "If I happened to be wearing eye makeup to school that day . . ." He is also attached to the allied theme of being uneducated in the formal sense, particularly compared with the erudite Teller—and, in "Asparagus Valley" days, with the equally erudite Wier Chrisemer. In 1977, when John Corr, of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, paid a visit to an old mansion in Lambertville, New Jersey, that seemed to be serving as home for just about everybody with any connection to the "Asparagus" troupe except Chrisemer ("I have a limited tolerance for squalor"), Penn told him, "I'm the only one of the group who is not overqualified." Onstage in the "Asparagus Valley" show, Penn not only identified Chrisemer as a magna-cum-laude graduate of Amherst but mentioned his S.A.T. scores. Penn says that when he and his partners formed "Asparagus Valley," in 1975, they made a pact prohibiting any jobs outside show business—a pact he now sees as "my way of pulling them down to my level: I was the only one who had no other skills."

Chrisemer told me that it was not exactly a pact and not exactly a prohibition, but Penn is not a man who has much use for qualifying phrases. Although he speaks admiringly of few performers, if he does admire someone—the comedian Bobcat Goldthwait, for instance, who also happens to be a favorite of Sarah's—he tends to express that admiration by saying simply, "Bobcat Goldthwait is a god." Penn also has a penchant for praising performances that you wouldn't think were his sort of thing—the night-club act of Dean Martin, say, or the launching of a NASA space probe. Not long ago, I happened to be with Penn when the name of Liberace came up. Several of us were standing in a hall at NBC, waiting for a taping of "Late Night with David Letterman" to begin. Since the Westside Arts run, Penn and Teller have been regular guests on Letterman and "Saturday Night Live," and they made their biggest television splash by emancipating a small bag of cockroaches on Letterman's desk. At the taping we were waiting for, they were hoping to outdo that with a little trick involving blood-sucking leeches.

PASTRY
ESPRESSO
CAFE
M.IAN

"I loved Liberace," Penn said. "He was doing what the Rolling Stones tried to do, but he was doing it right."

A couple of people nodded slowly. Someone muttered, "In a manner of speaking."

EVEN Edward Jones has acknowledged that Penn was a character in high school. Penn remembers having the second-longest hair in the school. The longest hair, he has always been willing to admit, was on the head of Marc Garland, who now presides over props and other backstage matters for "Penn & Teller"—a position identified in the program as Director of Covert Activities. Penn's admission does not in any way mean that he cedes Garland any leadership in the bad-attitude department. ("I was a troublemaker and he wasn't.") So far, Garland has been spared the experience of hearing his S.A.T. scores discussed from the stage, but in telling the audience the enormous contribution the Director of Covert Activities makes to the show Penn has been known to work in the information that Garland was elected president of the senior class. Penn says they became close only after the election. "He would never have been elected senior-class president if he had been my friend then," Penn once told me, with some pride. Garland bears other marks of overt respectability. He acknowledges being a college graduate, for instance, and he is the son of a doctor. Penn insists that his association with Garland is the only way folks in Greenfield can explain the success of a rebellious cutup like Penn Jillette: "This talentless lump of flesh has been dragged to stardom by Marc Garland."

"Penn was just outrageous," Garland says now, recalling high-school days in Greenfield. "He had all this creative energy. He was out of his mind with ideas—maybe not even ideas, but ideas that he wanted to have ideas—and here he was stuck in this very straight, for him oppressive atmosphere. So he was the crazy: too loud, too much energy, too crazily dressed." Even his choice of a sympathetic grownup to talk to was unusual—John Norton, who sold ice-cream bars out of

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a decorated truck called the Ding Dong Cart. An educated man who had worked as a parole officer, Norton answered Penn's questions about books and discussed any subject Penn wanted to discuss and never mentioned Penn's appearance. That must have taken some doing. As Norton remembers his first glimpse of Penn, "I saw this tall, gawky, fright-wig-hair sort of kid riding a unicycle and juggling. Which caught my eye."

Penn had never been in much danger of becoming the typical American boy. He was an ungainly child, taller than his teachers before he got out of grade school. His parents were considerably older than those of his classmates; his only sibling, a sister, was twenty-three when he was born. His father worked for some years as a guard at the Franklin County jail, but quit at fifty-five to devote full time to trading in coins. When I met him, at the opening night of "Penn & Teller" in Boston, he gave me a business card that said "Why Don't 'Jillette' Me Have Your Coin Business?" If I had any coin business, I would. Almost everyone who meets the elder Jillette and his wife seems to use the same phrase to describe them—"the salt of the earth." Penn's life toward the end of grade school was covered in a high-school essay he wrote in the third person for a sympathetic English teacher named Beverly Adler Lucey, who became a close friend: "He smiled a lot and was called 'goofy,' walked kinda funny and was called 'Froggy' (affectionately of course) and was rotten at sports, so he had for friends a kid who longed to play kickball but had 30 pound braces on his legs, a curly-haired kid who never knew why he hung around with Penn, and anyone else who could be conned into sitting out a kickball game. He had 47 strikes against him from the beginning—the major one of which was not being aware he had all these strikes against him."

If Edward Jones had been a truly vengeful sort of high-school principal, he could have said something about Penn even more embarrassing than the fact that he had graduated in good standing with his class: he was never in any serious trouble. John Norton, the Ding Dong man, remembers him as "a lamb in wolf's clothing." According to Marc Garland, "Penn would hang out with all the guys who did drugs and were very harmful to themselves, and then he never did any of it. He was always under control." Penn might maintain that he was too much of a weirdo to have hung out with anybody, but he wouldn't deny having always had an abhorrence of drugs. He says that he decided at the age of twelve or thirteen never to drink or take drugs. At the time, he recalls, Frank Zappa, someone whose music and antics Penn admired, was talking against drugs "from a condescending point of view rather than from a goody-goody point of view." At that age, Penn also blamed drugs for killing his one true hero, Lenny Bruce—although, he acknowledges, "I blame every other addict for his own problems."

Penn has also publicly confessed a deep affection for his parents. Teller, too, dotes on *his* parents. "It's such a wild thing they do," I was once told by Teller's mother, who actually doesn't know quite how wild it is, since she can't bear to keep her eyes open during the dangerous parts of the show. "You'd think they'd be hardboiled. But they're not—not toward their parents." Readers of a *Playboy* interview with Penn and Teller in 1987 must have been surprised to find that it ended with Penn saying, "*Please* let us say something nice about how wonderful our parents are"—just as fans who ask what a manic talker like Penn could be on are surprised to be told that he is on Diet Coke. In fact, Penn and Teller treat all older people with great respect. After the opening night of the show in Boston—an event that drew some rather exotic punk fans as well as a number of older people, many of whom had come on a chartered-bus trip from Greenfield organized by Marc Garland's mother—Penn confessed to me, "I like both kinds of people with blue hair." In a way, I suppose, the most surprising thing about Penn and Teller—performers who once called themselves "The Bad Boys of Magic," and have been called by others hip and cynical and nihilistic, and even sadomasochistic—is that they are, in some old-fashioned ways, pretty good boys.

Teller has never even claimed to have been a rebellious teen-ager, but he'll bow to no one when it comes to having been an outsider. Teller was an accomplished magician by the time he got to high school—which, as Penn once said about skill in juggling, is another way of saying, "I have a terrible social life. I'm not normal. I spend all my time practicing." By his own account, Teller spent a lot of time alone in his room. "He always seemed to isolate himself," Teller's mother has said. The family lived in a row house in center-city Philadelphia. Teller was an only child—a late arrival to people who had reached the age at which they assumed they would be childless. Teller's parents had met at art school in Philadelphia; his father eventually found work doing lettering for advertisements. Teller thinks of them both as bohemians who worked hard at doing what parents in conventional families do—father building a puppet stage for his son's show, mother ordering a little magic set from "Howdy Doody" when her son displayed an interest in magic. The magic set was obtained when Teller was five. "From then on," his mother said not long ago, "his whole life was in terms of magic. Even *he* is a mystery to us."

Teller was interested in Edgar Allan Poe rather than Lenny Bruce. He went to Central High School, a legendary high-aptitude public school, and it never occurred to him not to go to college. He didn't show up at school in the sort of clothing and haircut that would make him notorious. In fact, he was the sort of quiet, slight, rather shy young man who doesn't make much of an impression on his classmates at all. What he did have in common with Penn, in addition to a high tolerance for practice, was an outsider's instinct for finding an adult to talk to—in Teller's case, an English teacher named David Rosenbaum, who ran the dramatic society. Rosenbaum, a magician himself, believes that a properly structured magic act is "a tiny drama reporting something that can't happen," but he and Teller often talked about principles that Rosenbaum could apply to any sort of dramatic performance. They still do. Rosenbaum is a strong believer in a theory of dramatic structure propounded by Aristotle and tinkered with a bit by Nietzsche—the tragic rhythm of mimesis praxeos (prologue), agon (conflict), mimesis peripeteias (reversal), pathos sparagmos (suffering and dismemberment), and epiphany. He has no trouble at all

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"... and then he said my terrine aux foies de volaille was superb."

"What's that?"

"What's that? How can my own little sister be such a philistine?"

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"Oh, and your feelings have been trying to get in touch with you."

doing a close textual analysis of, say, "The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society" according to the theory—seeing a "two-level epiphany" in the combination of a knife-throwing parody and a rendition of Khatchaturian's "Sabre Dance" that included Penn juggling plumbers' plungers.

Rosenbaum is retired now, but he still goes into Central on Wednesday afternoons to meet with the magic club. He lives right across the street from the school, in an apartment that includes, in no discernible order, a non-reversing mirror and a clock that runs counterclockwise and a spittoon and a lot of pasteboard boxes and a heavy layer of dust. ("I'm allergic to dust, so rather than stir it up I leave it on the floor and walk quietly.") He does some writing, and he works on his magic act, which he performs annually for the Lombard Swimming Club. After some years of discussion, Teller persuaded him to change the character in the act from a cheeky Irish teenager—the character that already existed when Rosenbaum got the act, many years ago, from a cheeky Irish teenager—to a Scottish magician whose body has been inhabited by the Devil. Apparently, Rosenbaum always had a certain resemblance to the common notion of what Satan looks like, and, with the trim of a goatee here and the addition of a devilish waistcoat there, he began trying to heighten the resemblance. At this point, he looks enough like the Prince of Darkness to throw a scare into people who might have once made some rash promises they'd just as soon forget.

Even in college, where Teller spent a lot of time working on his magic act, he saw his future life as something like the life lived by David Rosenbaum—high-school teaching, with some performing on the side. By chance, Penn says that he, too, saw the life of his grownup friend as a model: Penn could see himself making a living by doing something that didn't take a lot of concentration, such as selling ice cream from a truck, and spending the rest of his time writing stories that were heavily influenced by Lenny Bruce. In fact, Penn eventually did drive his own Ding Dong Cart, but not for long. Teller, though, taught Latin for four years, with very little performing on the side. Having just been given tenure, he resisted Penn's pestering before, in 1975, he finally agreed to take a one-year leave of absence to do magic, starting with a Renaissance festival in Minnesota. Teller thinks that without the push from Penn he might still be teaching Latin. Rosenbaum thinks that might be true—partly because Teller's aspirations in magic went so far beyond being a run-of-the-mill magician. "Teller saw himself—and, I think, justifiably—as among the greats," Rosenbaum told me. "The single name has something to do with that: there was a great magician named Heller and a great magician named Kellar. The kind of success that Teller's vision insisted upon seems too grandiose to be possible. It looks like a fantasy. You need gall to think you can do it." It isn't clear that Teller had that kind of gall. Fortunately for him, Penn had gall enough for two.

I WOULD describe Teller now as more of a grownup—more of a grownup, that is, than Penn. Teller has bought himself a house in Westchester. He lives there with a friend, and he enjoys, say, building a stone wall next to the garden. He often listens to music composed by people who are dead—and not as a result of a drug overdose. He almost never goes to more than one movie a day. All those are what I think of as grownup characteristics. Teller is seven years older than Penn, of course, but then these matters are not always strictly chronological. It may be that Penn will be more like Teller in seven years, but I rather doubt it.

Penn's offstage life is easy to imagine. Think of what would happen if an exceedingly smart teen-ager were suddenly told that from now on he's going to have no school, a lot of disposable income, and a job that leaves him free all day. You've got it. Penn goes to a lot of movies. He has a rock band. When I spent some time with him in New York last fall, just before "Penn & Teller" began its national tour, he was romantically involved (if that phrase can be applied to Penn) with an actress who happened to be off in California pursuing her own career, so he spent a lot of time hanging out with the guys. He and the guys would sometimes drop into record stores or the Times Square porn emporiums. Mostly, they went to the movies.

Penn and his friends may go to a movie any day of the week, but when he's in New York he always goes to a Times Square movie house at midnight

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on Friday. It's more than a habit; it's a ritual. The ritual is called Movie Night. It begins at the Howard Johnson's in Times Square at ten-thirty. Penn is partial to the Times Square Howard Johnson's. That may be partly because he once washed dishes at a HoJo's. It may be partly because eating at Howard Johnson's sets him apart from the sort of people who go to restaurants that serve whole-grain bread—the sort of people he suspects of believing in the healing power of crystals and of not appreciating the wonders wrought by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. It may be partly because when he and Marc Garland first went to Howard Johnson's on Times Square at ten-thirty, after a Westside Arts performance, the service was so bad that the timing worked out perfectly for a midnight movie.

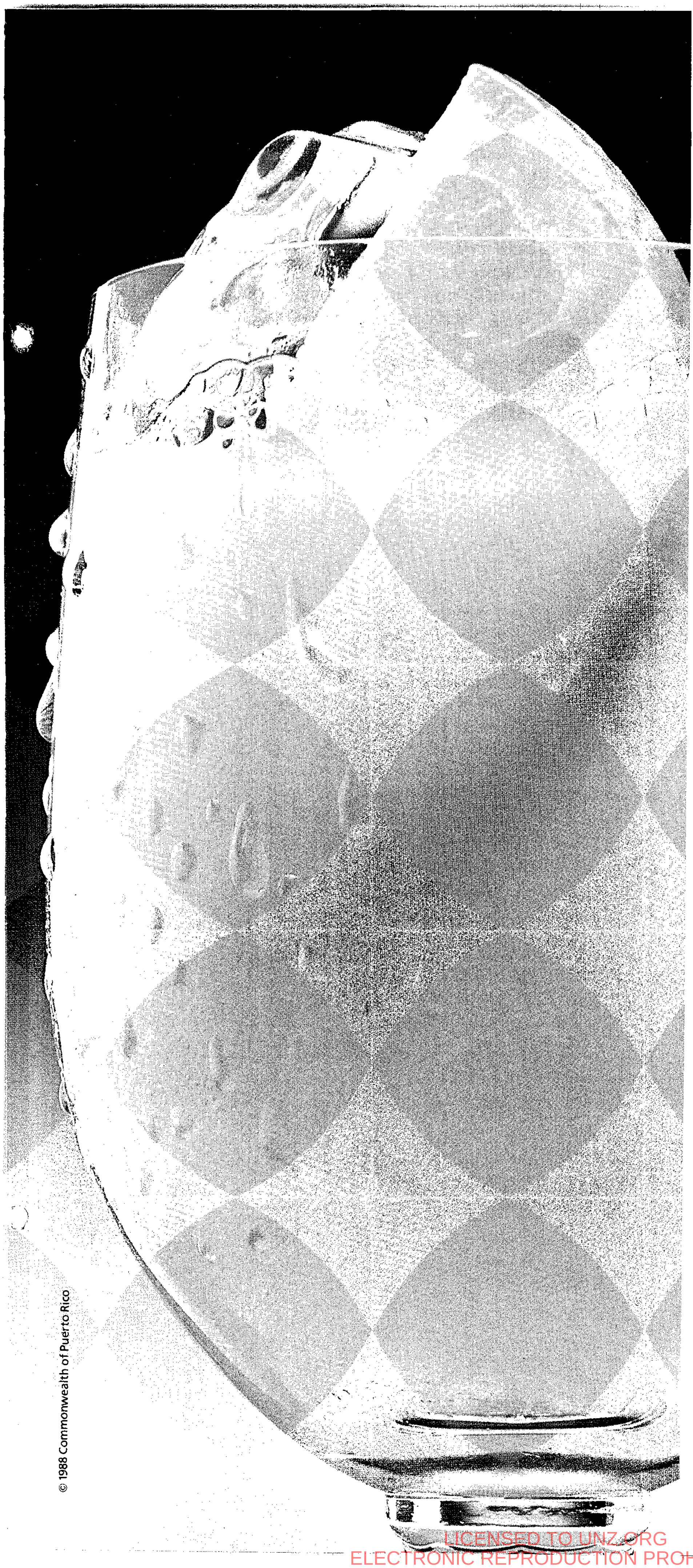
No announcements are made about Movie Night. Anybody who wants to participate simply shows up at the Times Square Howard Johnson's at ten-thirty. The night I went, there were a dozen or so people—Penn, Marc Garland, a few film students from N.Y.U., a young woman who had done a piece for *Rolling Stone* on the movie Penn and Teller have made, and a comedy writer named Eddie Gorodetsky, who collaborated with Penn and Teller on a sort of how-to video called "Penn & Teller's Cruel Tricks for Dear Friends." A lot of the dinner-table discussion was about movies—particularly "Leonard: Part VI," which the Movie Night regulars found so bad that they saw it three Fridays in a row. Everyone at the table seemed excited about the prospect of another Movie Night. "Actually, Movie Night is too big a part of my life," one of the students said to the table at large. "It's because the rest of my life sucks."

The rules surrounding Movie Night are strict. Joining the gang at HoJo's for a late supper of fried clams and then skipping the movie is not done. "It's called *Movie* Night," Penn reminded me when I said that I wasn't sure I was up to going to a movie that starts at midnight. When the Motion Picture Association rating symbol flashes on the screen to indicate that a preview is about to be shown, all Movie Night patrons always say "Yessss." (That custom started as a simple expression of anticipation, I was told by Penn, who added, "The fact that previews are better than movies is so obvious it's not even an observation.") If the title of the movie is mentioned in the movie, it is always greeted by Movie Night people with polite applause. I'm still not clear as to how that custom began, but I do know that it leads to a lot of applause in a movie like "Wall Street." Perhaps the most important rule is that Movie Night people always sit in the first row. Penn told me that the Movie Night gang once arrived to find a young man sitting in the first row. Somebody explained to him that he was certainly welcome to stay as long as he understood that certain Movie Night rules would be observed around him, and that he'd be expected to help pass the candy that gets handed back and forth so constantly at Movie Night that its presence is practically another rule. He decided to stay, and became a regular.

Neither the drawn-out affirmative that greets previews or the applause at the mention of the title draws any attention from the rest of the audience. You'd have to do a lot more than that to be noticed at a Friday-night midnight show in Times Square. The patrons are not shy. Some of them play their beat boxes right up to the time the lights are lowered. A lot of them comment freely on the movie while it's going on. Hooting is a common form of response to whatever's happening on the screen. Just before the movie starts, the theatre looks and sounds a bit like the subway station underneath it—people milling around, radios playing, an occasional argument breaking out. I'm told that every so often, just before the lights dim, Eddie Gorodetsky leaps up from his front-row seat, turns around to face the audience, and, in his best film-festival manner, delivers a film analysis that starts with something like "Tonight's film is a delightful comedy romp . . ." Apparently, the Movie Night crowd loves it, partly because nobody else pays the slightest attention.

I AGREE with Penn that building an act on extraordinary skill at what he sometimes calls "cheap circus schlock"—juggling, acrobatics, clowning, magic, sword-swallowing, fire-eating—is an outsider's game. The homecoming queen and the president of the student council simply have better things to do. Penn spent a lot of his childhood practicing. He has often said that he did nothing but practice juggling from the age of twelve to the age of fifteen, at which point he discovered that it wasn't cool. Then, apparently, he spent only most of his time practicing juggling, leaving some time to practice the unicycle. In Greenfield, Penn happened to live next door to brothers named Colin and Michael Moschen, and in high school the three boys had a juggling act that played the occasional nursing-home date or school assembly. Michael Moschen is now a renowned juggler, who has been called by the *Times* "a sculptor in motion." Although it's not easy to imagine Penn as the partner of a juggler whose act is so rarefied that he is sometimes described as a "movement artist," the two of them once spent months in a cheap East Village apartment trying to perfect an act highlighted by the passing of nine clubs between them. "We had heard that no jugglers had ever done that before," Penn told me, "so we figured that as soon as we passed nine clubs the world would beat a path to our door." Eventually, they did pass nine clubs between them, and, as it turned out, nobody much cared. Penn took that as an early lesson in the ways of show business.

Moschen and Penn ended up doing their act at Great Adventure, in New Jersey, and then Penn worked on the street in Philadelphia as a single. By all accounts, Penn's street act—which featured the juggling of knives the size of smallish broadswords—was spectacular. In 1977, when he was performing next to a hot-dog stand in the Newmarket shopping area of Philadelphia, a piece in the *Inquirer* said that he was "the best thing to hit the scene since hot mustard." It also said that he drew crowds because "he is too obnoxiously loud to be ignored," and that he spent money "as fast as he makes it on movies." According to Teller, Penn had a perfectly structured street act—"the



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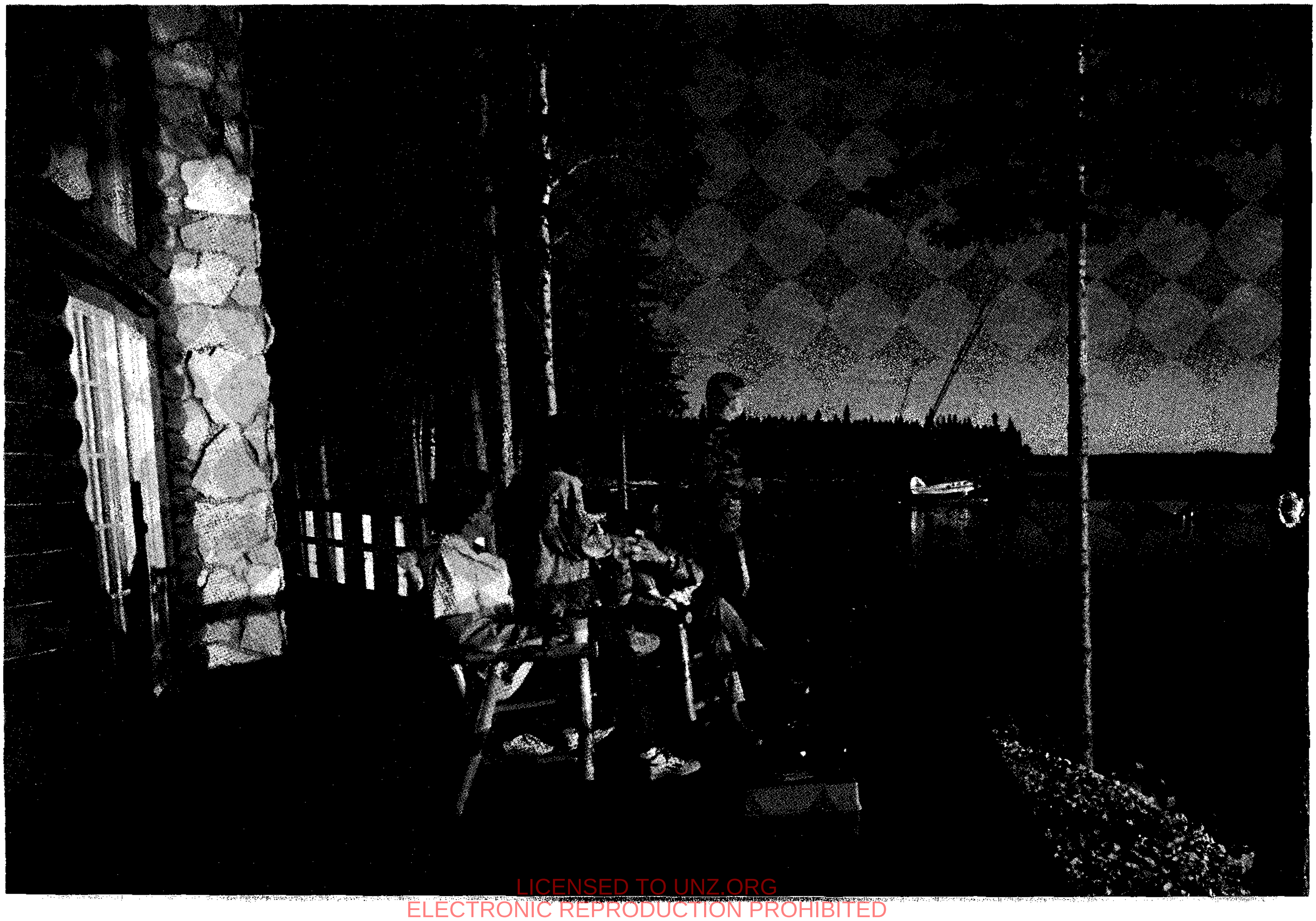
tightest and most magnificent twelve minutes that anyone had ever seen on the street." Penn was loud and he was funny and he was good at the delicate game of separating spectators from their money at the end of the act. "Remember," he'd say as he passed the hat, "I'm six-six, I have three very sharp knives, and I have an excellent memory."

Penn no longer juggles at all in "Penn & Teller." His last juggling number was cut between the Westside Arts run and Broadway. "My father hates that," Penn told me when I mentioned the absence of juggling. "He thinks everyone will think that I can't do anything except talk." I suspect that Penn has some lingering sympathy for that viewpoint himself—although he and Teller are dismayed when they're mentioned as part of the New Vaudeville, a group of performers who tend to base their acts on mastering the traditional carnival skills. (Teller once dismissed the New Vaudeville as "a bunch of aging hippies looking at old pictures of W. C. Fields.") From childhood, he and Teller, both obsessive practicers and incurable perfectionists, seem to have operated in the belief that any performance rests on an extraordinary level of pure skill. Just before the national tour of "Penn & Teller" opened in Boston, Penn mentioned to me that Teller was now better at the needle trick than he had been when I last saw the show—on the opening night of the Broadway run. I said that was hard to believe. Teller has been doing the needle trick since college. One statement in Penn's monologue that may be literally true is that seeing Teller do the needle trick fourteen years ago was what convinced him that he absolutely had to work with Teller. Even before Broadway, Penn had seen Teller do the needle trick a couple of thousand times. "It's better," Penn insisted. "Teller manages to get more across with subtler moves. He's been working on it."

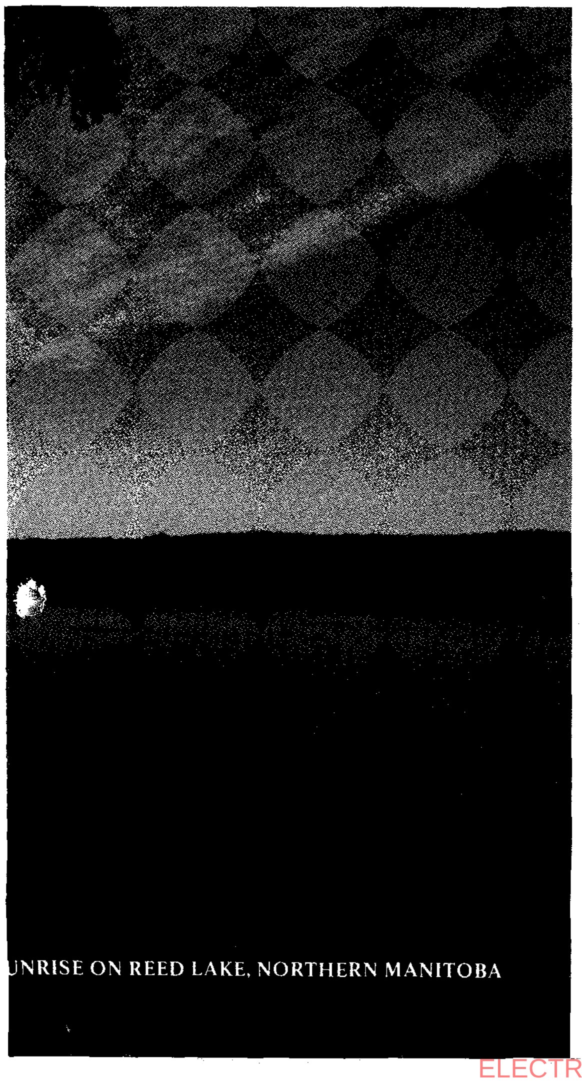
IT'S natural for street performers to extract humor from the fact that whatever skill they have managed to master in those years of practicing is not generally considered worth anybody's time. Even now, about the nicest thing that Penn ever says about juggling or magic or ventriloquism or acrobatics is that they are "intrinsically boring." Penn's juggling act always included a harsh view of where juggling stood among the minor theatrical arts, and a harsh view of those who did it in public. When he did his trademark knife-juggling number in "Asparagus Valley," he used to say, "What I think about when I'm watching a routine like this is what kind of mental or physical inadequacies would force a person to take up such a self-destructive, exhibitionist form of overcompensation." In fact, the relationship that street performers strike up with their audience is based partly on the assumption that everyone involved is hip enough to realize that in the great scheme of things light entertainment of any kind is not of earthshaking importance. At one point in the current version of "Penn & Teller," Teller's insistence on staying submerged in a water tank until Penn is able to divine the proper card seems to have led to his drowning, and Penn says that you have to admire "the little creep" for being willing "to die for a principle he be-



lieved in, albeit an insignificant card trick.”

Now that magic has supplanted Penn’s juggling and Chrisemer’s performance on the pipe organ and the xylophone as the foundation the show is built on, all of Penn’s disdain for the intrinsically boring skills has been channelled into an attitude toward magic that is often expressed by the description of “Penn & Teller” as “the magic show for people who hate magic.” In the show and in interviews, Penn goes out of his way to make fun of magicians like Doug Henning and David Copperfield; in a recent *Penthouse* interview he said that for the past forty or fifty years magic in this country had been “controlled by retards.” It makes sense commercially, of course, for Penn and Teller to put some distance between themselves and the greasy guy in a tux with a lot of birds. One thing that Richard Frankel, the producer who brought “Penn & Teller” to New York, insisted on was that they drop the sobriquet “The Bad Boys of Magic”; he considered the very word “magic” box-office poison. As it happens, though, Teller does believe that conventional American magicians are mired in a style of magic that was fresh and interesting only around the time it was invented—in the mid-nineteenth century, by the French magician Robert-Houdin, who revolutionized magic by discarding the magician’s traditional flowing robes and mysteries-of-the-East presentation in favor of modern devices and the same sort of evening clothes that the gentlemen in the audience were wearing. Penn and Teller see their style as rejecting the assumption that “the people in the audience are ignorant savages who will fall at our feet and worship us for performing supernatural miracles.” Penn may enjoy describing the “Penn & Teller” approach to magic as tipping the gaff; Teller can also describe it as the same sort of departure that was made by Robert-Houdin.

Before Penn and Teller perform the cups-and-balls trick with clear-plastic cups, Penn talks about an enraged magician (“some guy who works cruise ships”) who confronted them in the lobby one night and accused them of betraying their colleagues by revealing tricks. I asked Charles Reynolds if some magicians were genuinely upset by such revelations—we were having lunch so that I could exploit the rare privilege of having an authority right in the neighborhood—and he said that they were indeed. He later sent me a two-issue interview on the subject in a newsletter called *Stan Allen’s Inside Magic*. In the interchange, Penn and Teller maintained that they actually gave away virtually nothing that the audience didn’t already know (“If anybody is performing magic thinking that when they handle a deck of cards people think they’re handling them in a completely fair and normal way, they’re just kidding themselves,” Penn said. “If you don’t know that anyone else knows where Argentina is, that’s *your* problem”), and some readers maintained that Penn and Teller were, among other things, “insulting, egotistical, stuckup geeks.” Charles himself believes that Penn and Teller are an over-all benefit to the trade, since they send audiences away from a magic show in a happy state. He thinks that many magicians of the first rank share that belief, even if they sometimes find the constant magician-bashing tire-



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some. In Charles's view, the magicians who become furious when Penn explains how a card is "forced" or how a cup is "loaded" have an outsized notion of how much people in the audience learn from having a trick explained to them, and how much they care.

From what Charles told me, I gather that anybody willing to read enough books can find out how most magic tricks are done—which still leaves the problem of doing them, of course. According to Charles, virtually all magic acts lean heavily on the same dozen or so basic effects—what varies is simply what magicians call the presentation—and almost all those effects were being produced in Victorian times. It's rare for a magician simply to invent an effect, Charles told me, but Teller apparently invented the effect in which he destroys a rose by cutting into its shadow. ("I can recall some night when I was probably sixteen or seventeen," Teller told me when I asked him about the origin of the trick he calls Shadows. "I was doing the sort of thing that I used to do in those days, which was sitting around alone by melodramatic candlelight. I had this set of Playskool blocks, and when I piled the blocks up I noticed that the candlelight was casting a shadow on the wall, and the idea just occurred to me to go up and touch the shadow and flick the blocks at the same time, so the blocks would tumble down. And they clattered down with this wonderfully skeletal sound. And I thought, God! There's got to be something to do with this!") Charles believes that Teller's Shadows and Harry Blackstone's Floating Light Bulb are the two outstanding moments in American magic.

The needles trick is not unique, Charles told me, but Teller is the first magician to give it national prominence since Houdini used it as one of the featured effects of his show at the Hippodrome in 1918. (On what was then the largest stage in the world, Houdini said he would perform both the largest and the smallest feats of magic; the other featured trick was the vanishing of an elephant.) In a book Charles wrote with Doug Henning he said that there is some dispute about where Houdini got the needles trick. Houdini himself once said he got it from a couple of Hindu conjurers at the 1893 World's Fair, in Chicago; others have concluded that he picked it up from a sideshow entertainer called Maxie the Needle King. Since Houdini's time, some magicians have done the trick with razor blades, on the theory that razor blades would be easier than needles for the audience to see—a variation that David Rosenbaum finds less satisfying, since the "story" of needles appearing on a thread is much more satisfying. A magician named Marvin Roy does the trick with tiny light bulbs, which emerge lighted on a wire. Charles says that the secret of Houdini's needles trick has been explained in any number of magic books; in 1898 Houdini's own magic book offered it for five dollars. Apparently, though, Teller figured out a better way to do the trick, and, according to David Rosenbaum, if Houdini saw Teller perform it now he wouldn't know how it was done. As Penn said in Boston, Teller has been working on that trick.

The needles trick is not actually one of Charles's favorite effects—he sometimes refers to it as "oral magic"—but he admires Teller's presentation of it. In fact, he has great admiration in general for Teller as a serious magician. Penn, of course, also sees Teller as an extraordinary magician—the sort of magician who can invent Shadows because he begins by thinking of what he wants to do and then works backward to figure out how to do it. "Shadows is a pure statement of Teller's taste," Penn once told me. "Fire-eating is a clear statement of me. And they're back to back in the show. The fact that his is better I've been able to put aside." When I mentioned to Penn one day that Charles Reynolds thinks of Teller as among the finest half-dozen magicians now working, Penn said, "Teller's one of the three best magic minds alive today, and the two others don't have taste."

"WE were very grandiose," Penn said. "Wier was intellectually grandiose, Teller was artistically grandiose, and I was just grandiose."

Penn, Eddie Gorodetsky, my wife, and I were at Sylvia's Restaurant in Harlem the afternoon after I attended Movie Night. The plan was to have lunch, then drop Penn and Gorodetsky in Times Square on the way home so that they could go to another movie. Penn was recalling the days when "The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society" was formed. "I had unbounded energy and unfounded confidence," he went on.

"And unprofessional makeup," Gorodetsky said.

At Chrisemer's suggestion, Penn had looked up Teller in New Jersey, and they had taken to having dinner together whenever Teller came into New York—long, necessarily cheap dinners that revolved around acid analyses of whatever was being offered up in the way of entertainment in New York. The assumption that they could do better than the performances they were discussing was an unspoken premise of the dinner-table conversation, and by the time Penn and Teller drove out to the Renaissance festival in Minnesota it was understood that in addition to doing their separate acts they would be working together on writing a show. The show's name came from a stretch of the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts that got its sobriquet in the days before absolutely everything was grown in California—the Asparagus Valley.

I finally went to a Renaissance festival last fall, after years of hearing them described as a triumph of American packaging. The one I attended, which is organized as a benefit for the Kansas City Art Institute, runs seven weekends every fall on some land next to the Agricultural Hall of Fame, fifteen miles from Kansas City. It turned out to be much more elaborate than I had expected. Stretches of what appeared to be three-quarter-scale ersatz-timbered buildings held dozens of booths serving "feasts fit for ye kings" and the Budweiser and Coke that in Renaissance festivals comes under the category of "drynke." There was an outdoor arena for jousts that took place twice a day. There were a hundred and thirty crafts venders, with names like "Ye Olde Wood Turnery" and "Ye Olde Bellsmith." The entertainment included acts like Simpkin the Foole (Ballad Monger), Seymoure (Churlish Loute), and what is often spoken of as the most successful act on the Renaissance-festival circuit—a couple of antic Shakespearean duellers called, I'm afraid, Puke & Snot. Businessmen in Friar Tuck costumes sold peanuts for a Kiwanis Club project. A lot of young people who were costumed as Shakespearean fools or members of Robin Hood's band roamed the grounds making smart-aleck remarks in vaguely English accents. A sign just outside the entrance said, "Be Ye Wary of light-fingered varlots in the presse of the

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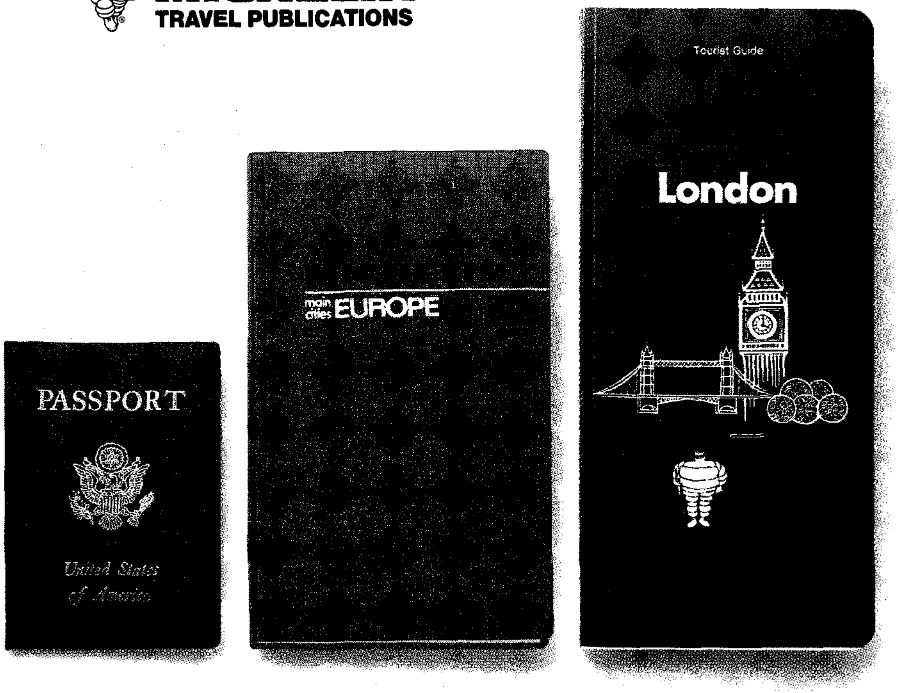

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crowde.” The weekend I was there, the paid attendance was twenty-four thousand three hundred and six.

Like most of the places where Penn and Teller worked on the street, Renaissance festivals provide a protected environment for street performers, so that a juggler can concentrate on the clubs rather than keeping one eye on the lookout for cops or for the three acrobats who seem to think the corner belongs to them. The strollers are there to be entertained, and they can even find a schedule of entertainment in a program. Turning a sword-swallower or an acrobat into a Renaissance sword-swallower or a Renaissance acrobat is just a matter of a leather vest here and a rope belt there. In fact, Teller, who was still in his grandiosely arty phase, was already accustomed to working in a more or less Renaissance costume—black tights, a black turtleneck, and leather boots. (Penn and Teller have never been able to decide who had the more pretentious act in those days, although Penn claims that Teller's silence skews the comparison: “He could be redoing parts of the Iliad in his linking-ring routine, and because he didn't speak it didn't come across well enough for him to get busted on it.”) Penn made an easy transition to Renaissance-festival patter. “Basically, it's just anachronism jokes,” he once told me. “A Renaissance festival is nothing but ‘ye olde Michael Jackson.’ ”

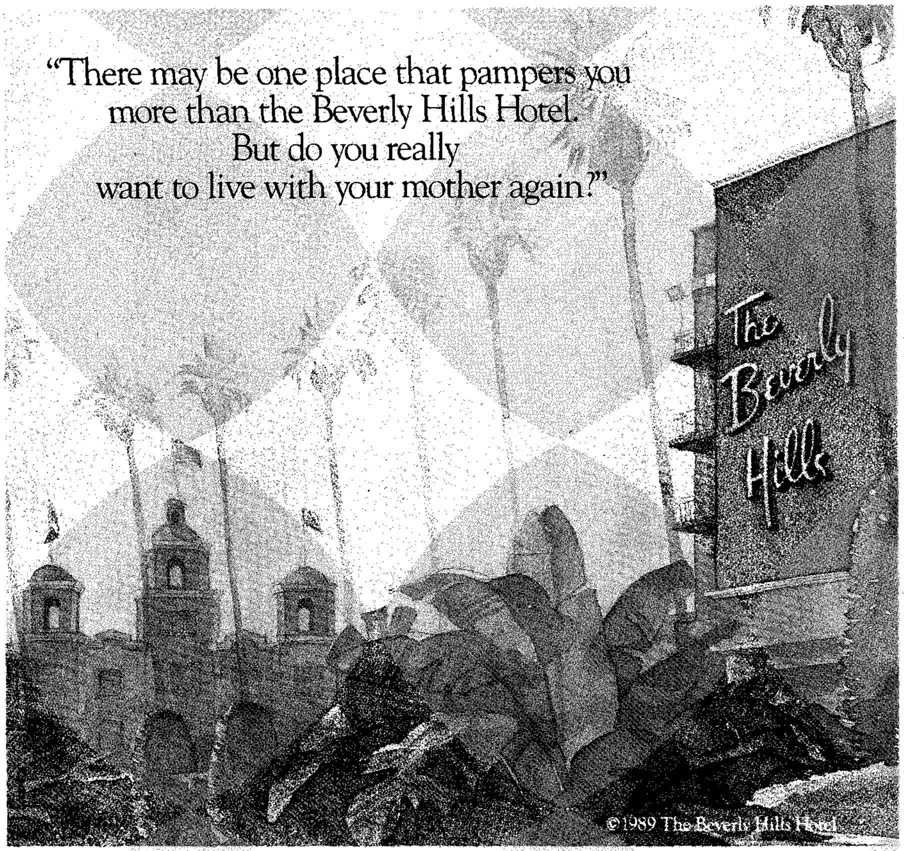
As “The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society” was struggling to establish itself—scrambling for small theatres, trying to get on the college circuit—Renaissance festivals became the fallback occupation of choice for Penn and Teller. Even Wier Chrisemer appeared for a while in a Renaissance festival. Just how he managed to give a Renaissance twist to the xylophone is lost to history; he claims to have forgotten. At a Renaissance festival, top acts are paid by the management as well as by the crowd, and an effective street performer can prosper. Eventually, Penn and Teller were taking in several thousand dollars a weekend—more, Teller thinks, than any other act on the circuit except, of course, the nonpareils, Puke & Snot.

GETTING “The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society” on the boards for the first time proved relatively easy. Some friends of Teller's had access to a tiny theatre in Princeton, and “Asparagus” played a two-weekend engagement there in November of 1975. In the hope of attracting some press attention, Penn, who had been put in charge of publicity, concocted an appropriately grandiose stunt that was a parody of the spectacular jumps then bringing a lot of notoriety to Evel Knievel, the daredevil motorcyclist. Penn's stunt was called Asparagus Penn's Unicycle Jump for Life and was described as an attempt to jump over five Volkswagen Rabbits on a rocket-propelled unicycle. “I had a lot of phony figures on what would happen when the rockets kicked in when the unicycle hit thirty-five miles an hour,” Penn told us at lunch that day at Sylvia's. Chrisemer had composed some ersatz aphorisms like “One Man One Wheel.” Apparently, the irony of all this was lost on the people who showed up to watch Asparagus Penn's Unicycle Jump for Life—and there turned out to be a lot more of them than anyone could have predicted. The organizers of Asparagus Penn's Unicycle Jump for Life sometimes estimate the crowd as having been in the thousands, but they all would probably acknowledge that the memories of disaster survivors are not completely trustworthy. According to Chrisemer, “everyone in the world was there to see Penn spill his blood, and they were greatly disappointed when he didn't.” The Volkswagen dealer who had lent the Rabbits was also disappointed, since the crowd took out some of its own disappointment on his cars. Penn remembers falling off the ramp, being surrounded by angry drunks who were kicking him and spitting on him, and being rescued by an ambulance team that had been asked to the event strictly for reasons of verisimilitude. Penn told us that Teller offered the best analysis of Asparagus Penn's Unicycle Jump for Life only a day or so after the event: “Well, we wanted to see how far deadpan humor could go, and we found out.”

You'd think that Asparagus Penn's Unicycle Jump for Life might have ended Penn's career as a press agent, but he savors a story about how he went about trying to get “Asparagus” reviewed a year after the Jump, when it opened in a hundred-seat house called Theatre Five, upstairs in the Walnut Street Theatre complex, in Philadelphia. Theatre Five was the show's first extended booking. There was even an opening-night party, featuring cookies baked by Teller's mother. Penn says that, having no idea how reviewers happened to show up at openings, he looked in the *Inquirer* for a byline on a review, came across a review signed by William Collins, who was and is the *Inquirer's* first-string drama critic, and simply walked into the office and demanded to see him. (A person who is less protective of the general theme of a story than Penn is might point out that the meeting actually took place on a return engagement of "Asparagus" in Philadelphia two years later, when Penn's experience with reviews already included two or three reviews of the show by second-string *Inquirer* critics, but Penn might suggest that such a person's wild, wacky friends could have gone to the trouble of planting earlier reviews in the morgue of the *Inquirer* just to mess with his gray matter.) According to the story, Collins came out of his office to meet Penn—who was dressed in his usual costume of black leather jacket, jeans, and motorcycle boots—and, after being told about "Asparagus," asked why he should review it. Penn responded by picking up one of the spikes that newspapermen sometimes keep on their desks as a sort of old-fashioned vertical file, jamming it up his nose ("It's like the old carny trick of driving a nail up your nose—not a trick, really, just a skill"), and spinning it around by the papers at its base. Collins decided to review the show.

"Well, I do think I'd remember it, because that would certainly have been the most unusual approach anybody has ever made," Collins said when I asked him about the spike story one day. Not being one of those Ed Jones types who can make their day by calling Penn a liar, Collins added, "I'm not saying it couldn't have happened." Collins does remember writing a rave review of the show. He also remembers that when he returned to "Asparagus" one evening with his entire family Penn, giving no indication that Collins had been spotted in the audience, began talking about how helpful the review had been, and then said, "I hate to tell you how much we had to pay for it."

The fact that the "Asparagus" players "had absolutely no respect for any institution"—or any theatre critic, for that matter—impressed Collins. He was also impressed by the odd combina-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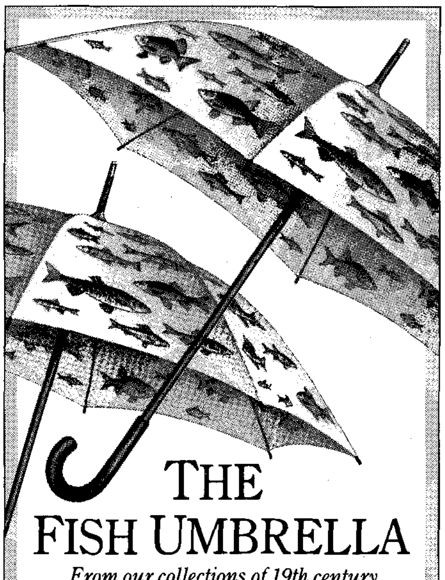

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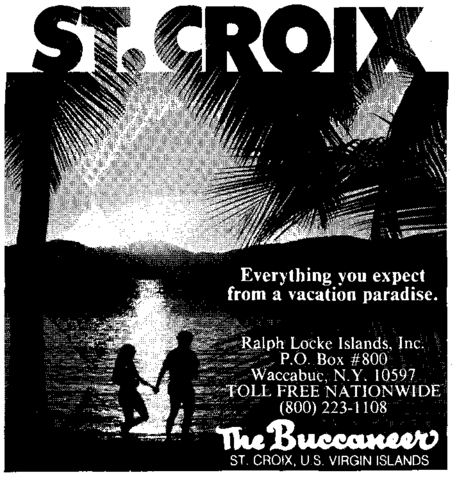

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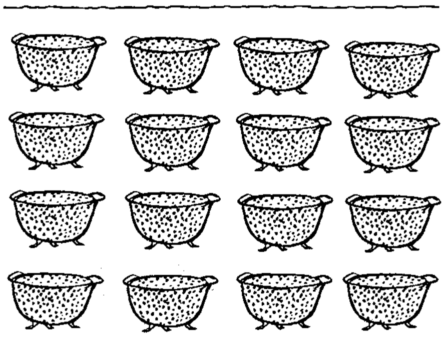

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tion of characters onstage. Chrisemer, who came across as what Collins called "the starchy one," spent a good part of the evening sitting rather stiffly at his keyboard. Teller was wearing the black Renaissance costume of the arty magician. (Teller, rather than Penn, was the one with long hair in those days. In a later version of "Asparagus," Penn at one point flips up the back of Teller's hairdo and says, "Hey, Teller, the sixties are over, and we lost.") Penn was almost as voluble as he is in the current show, but much less overbearing and cynical. His costume—cut-off shorts, a T-shirt, and mismatched sneakers—reflected his role as a prankish but almost naïve schoolboy. "There was something extremely unsettling psychologically about the combination of people," Collins told me. "That's what stopped me in my tracks. It had a kind of Pinteresque subtext."

The effect was not accidental. When I asked Teller what he thought "Asparagus Valley" was about, he said, " 'Asparagus Valley' had more to do with living with the idea of being different and enjoying that idea. The three of us dressed in complete contradiction to one another, and didn't acknowledge that at all. The fact that these were three people you wouldn't invite to the same party was always strongly commented on in reviews. And the fact that they were working apparently smoothly together, exploiting what were obviously their freakish individual natures, was, I think, really one of the central themes of it." Teller also believes that "Asparagus Valley" had "the formal elements of a religious ceremony." There was organ music, of course, and Chrisemer, the son of a Lutheran minister, delivered one monologue that always struck Teller as sounding very much like a sermon. The finale of "The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society" featured Penn—costumed, as Chrisemer puts it, "as a simple stalk of asparagus"—leading the audience in a song that was sung to the tune of the hymn "He Leadeth Me!" and had as its only lyric, repeated over and over, the word "asparagus."

"Asparagus" was "a play about theatrical risk," according to James Freydberg, the producer who took it to San Francisco after seeing it in Philadelphia. "What it said was that all entertainment is a risk—playing a violin concerto on the xylophone as much as swallowing fire," he told me not long ago. "It was also about how what you see is not really what's happening. It was a brilliant play. And if you didn't get it on that level it was simply enormously entertaining." Enormously entertaining was enough for most people who saw "Asparagus." The word "goofy" was often applied to it, in a nice way, and so was the word "zany." I've watched a videotape of "Asparagus"—made in San Francisco, where the version produced by Freydberg ran for two and a half years. It's a jolly evening. One of my favorite moments is in a number called the Mystery of the Peking Snow Duck. Chrisemer, dressed in a Chinese costume, shows the audience a rabbit, which he identifies as a Peking snow duck. (Penn, of course, says, "That's no duck.") As Chrisemer covers the rabbit with a cloth, Penn says, "You as audience members have only one responsibility—"

Suddenly, in the back of the house, Teller appears, wearing a gorilla mask—a mask that many years later was recycled as the head of MOFO the Psychic Gorilla—and banging cymbals together. When the audience turns to look at Teller, Chrisemer calmly picks up the rabbit, walks offstage, and returns with a balloon that he places under the cloth. As the suckers turn back to the stage, realizing that they've been tricked with a gross example of what magicians call misdirection, Penn finishes what he was saying about the audience's only responsibility: "At no time allow your eyes to wander."

The Mystery of the Peking Snow Duck is about as close as "Asparagus" gets to a "Penn & Teller" theme that Teller describes as "using your head in a world full of flimflam." There's no talk of cons or swindles. Nobody seems in danger of being stabbed or drowned. There are, as Freydberg points out, plenty of risks, but they seem daredevil rather than menacing. There's a straitjacket number, but those trying to escape are not suspended over a bed of spikes. In "Asparagus," Penn does virtually the same monologue with his fire-eating number that he does in "Penn & Teller"—talking about being attracted to the sideshow tent, and about how carnival fire-eaters gradually, knowingly make themselves sick through the accumulation of the tiny amount of lighter fluid that is invariably swallowed in each performance—but the number is done on a lighted stage and the show does not close with it but with Penn at his goofiest leading everyone in the “Asparagus” anthem. One number in “Asparagus,” based on translating “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” into German and back into English, does include a long, uncomfortable scene that begins with Penn taunting Chrisemer for being a spoiled college boy—a scene that both participants apparently found easier and easier to play as frictions surfaced toward the end of the run. In general, though, there was something jovial about “The Asparagus Valley Cultural Society.” It had some of the collegiate tone of the Othmar Schoeck concerts—what Chrisemer calls “a wide-eyed innocent craziness.” In attempting to describe “Penn & Teller” as it finally evolved for Broadway, critics have reached for a lot of adjectives, but I doubt if anybody has ever called it innocent.

As the San Francisco audience for “Asparagus” began to thin out, toward the end of 1981, Freydberg wanted to try bringing it to New York. Chrisemer was willing. Penn and Teller were not. They were leaving the show to do a sort of play they had written, “Mrs. Lonsberry’s Evening of Horror,” but doing the play was a way of leaving Chrisemer. When I asked Teller what caused the split, he said, “Wier wanted a life. He wanted at some point to go home to his girlfriend and try out a new dish from Julia Child. He wasn’t as crazy as we were.” Chrisemer, who was more interested in concocting musical numbers than in being a virtuoso of the keyboard, did not seem monomaniacally concerned with working on the details of the show—at least compared with people who had spent great chunks of their childhood alone in their room practicing. The way Chrisemer might have put it is that he didn’t subscribe to the proposition that practicing was the one true path to enlightenment. According to Freydberg, when it became apparent that the show needed some help he and Chrisemer wanted to bring in a director to have a look at it; Penn and Teller wanted to practice more. In Freydberg’s view, Penn wanted Chrisemer to have not simply the same commitment to perfectionism that he had but the same style of life—an impossibility for Chrisemer, who made no effort to hide his distaste for punk-rock music and Howard Johnson’s cuisine. Penn and Teller both say that they were getting restless—unsatisfied with “Asparagus” and itching to write a play. Their instincts were to try something both harsher and more outrageous. Even while they were doing “Asparagus Valley,” Chrisemer had begun to feel a pressure from his partners to turn toward darker material—material that he found “theatrically uninteresting.” When it came to subject matter and language, there was a serious problem between Chrisemer and his two partners that sounds rather old-fashioned these days—a problem of religion. Chrisemer is not only the son of a Lutheran pastor but a regular churchgoer and a choir leader. Both Penn and Teller have an active dislike of religion. In conversation they tend to lump it with spiritualism and psychic spoon-bending and a belief in channelling—all of which they dismiss as scams whose supposed miracles are easily explained tricks. “Religion was not

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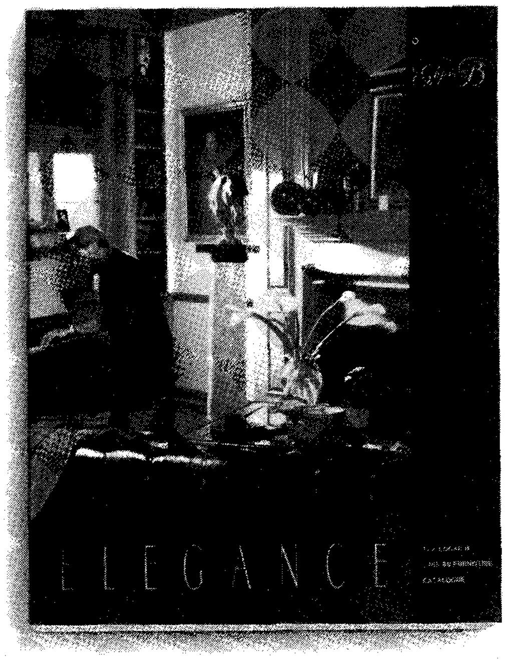

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only all bunk to them but they made no distinctions,” Chrisemer has told me. “To them, Falwell and Bonhoeffer are all the same.”

When the San Francisco run of “Asparagus Valley” closed, after nearly a thousand performances, Chrisemer wandered around for a while. He eventually settled not far from the house in New Jersey where he had gone to join Penn and Teller and Marc Garland in putting together the original “Asparagus.” He now works for AT&T, answering questions that customers have about computers. Although he sometimes says that in the long run the breakup was probably for the best, he also says, “I still smart sometimes.” Penn had told me that Wier Chrisemer was the funniest person he had ever known—I suppose even Bobcat Goldthwait was included in that, since Penn never qualifies—and I found him to have a quick, dry wit. He hasn’t talked to either Penn or Teller in some years, and he has never seen their show—even though, by chance, he was in San Francisco recently while “Penn & Teller” was there on national tour.

“My wife was out there at the same time,” I told Chrisemer one day on the telephone. “In fact, she ran into Penn in the lobby of her hotel. He was looking for someplace to get a manicure.”

“A manicure?” Wier asked, sounding puzzled.

“He has one red fingernail,” I explained.

Chrisemer paused a beat, and then said, “Is it supposed to get better?”

“PENN told me that he’s the worst director in the history of the world,” I told Teller one day when we were discussing “Mrs. Lonsberry’s Evening of Horror,” Penn’s first and last directorial effort.

“Oh, I wouldn’t say that,” Teller said. He paused to give the matter some thought. “Surely there are people who directed Whoopi Goldberg movies who are worse than Penn.”

“Now that I think of it, I saw a Whoopi Goldberg movie called ‘Jumpin’ Jack Flash’ on an airplane once, and you may be right,” I said. “And I speak as someone who didn’t see ‘Mrs. Lonsberry’s Evening of Horror.’ ”

Apparently, Penn was bad enough. Apparently, it was not a standout evening for Teller, either. He appeared (and spoke) as Julian Lonsberry, the son of a woman who gives séances for suckers—who are played, more or less, by the audience. Teller now says that “Lonsberry” was “a difficult, excessively cerebral show,” and that’s about the best thing anybody has ever said about it. Freydberg says that he considered it simply an extension of the dispute Penn and Teller were having with Wier Chrisemer about the theatrical value of horror and blasphemy. (“They got carried away with taking a shot at him.”) The San Francisco *Chronicle*, comparing “Mrs. Lonsberry’s Evening of Horror” unfavorably with the “bright and smudge-free” show that Penn and Teller and Chrisemer had presented in “Asparagus,” said “Lonsberry” had been ensnared in “its own labored premises.” It closed immediately—in Penn’s words, “a dismal failure.”

Teller now says that the disaster could have been worse. As producers, he and Penn had budgeted the show so that they could lose only what they actually had—basically, what they had saved during the long run of “Asparagus.” But Penn was, by all accounts, devastated. In Teller’s view, “it took him almost a year to recover.” Much of the recuperation took place on the Renaissance-festival circuit.

“MINNEAPOLIS is where I understand us to have created the show,” Teller has said. This was when Penn and Teller were back at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival, in the late summer of 1982. They were working as one act, called “Penn Jillette and/or Teller,” rather than as two singles, but otherwise, despite the long run of “Asparagus” in San Francisco, they didn’t seem much further along the show-business road than they had been when they drove out to Minnesota together seven years before. At a comedy club that happened to have an evening free, each of the two most popular acts at the festival—the other act, it almost goes without saying, was Puke & Snot—did a forty-five-minute segment. With forty-five minutes to fill instead of the twenty-five they ordinarily worked at a festival, Penn and Teller began to put together what eventually evolved into “Penn & Teller.” They had a core of numbers from “Asparagus”—Teller’s Shadows and his needles trick, Penn’s knife-juggling and his fire-eating. They salvaged what they could from the wreckage of “Lonsberry”—some of the darker language, the levitation of someone chosen from the audience, a complicated psychic trick that produces the Bible verse some volunteers had seemed to arrive at randomly. Without Chrisemer—without his antic musical numbers and his starchy presence on the stage and his neo-Schoeckian taste in material—the “cheap circus schlock” of “Asparagus” became colored more by Teller’s lifelong interest in menace and Penn’s growing interest in using your head in a world full of flimflam. The dominant voice was no longer that of a man of precise diction sitting at a pipe organ but that of a smart-aleck street performer holding some very large knives. As the tone evolved, it was as if Lenny Bruce and Edgar Allan Poe had formed a vaudeville act and one of them could juggle.

Penn and Teller polished their act in Minneapolis and in Toronto and Texas. Then there was a sudden opening at the L.A. Stage Company, a theatre in Los Angeles where Marc Garland had sought shelter as a technical director after the “Lonsberry” debacle. “Penn Jillette and/or Teller” was booked, and shortened to “Penn & Teller.” After a moderately successful run at the L.A. Stage Company, Penn and Teller played over a disco, with the beat coming up through the floor. In a theatre in Westwood, they sometimes played before audiences so small that the same volunteer might have to be called to the stage for more than one trick. They supplemented their income by doing séances for rich people’s dinner parties—announcing beforehand that everything was a trick, and then astonishing those present with revelations about their personal lives and connections with their dear departed. Eventually, though, Penn and Teller established themselves in Los Angeles as an evening in the theatre. They became sufficiently well known to do a PBS special, during which Penn said that he thought of the typical public-television show as "a mime piece called 'The Birth of a Baby Dove in the Ghetto.' "

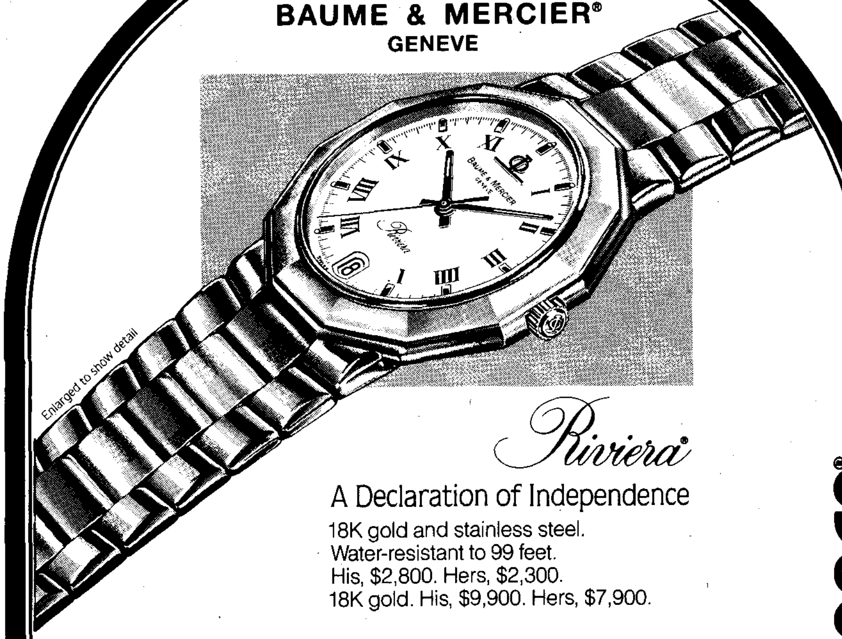
In fact, Richard Frankel told me, there were long and heated negotiations before they would agree to his terms for producing the show in New York—terms that included bringing in a director. Penn later told him that any time he negotiated over the phone with Frankel he stood naked under a Nazi flag. Why? Because he had read somewhere that when you negotiate you should know something that your opponent doesn't know. Penn knew that he was standing naked under a Nazi flag, and Frankel didn't. Furthermore, I suppose, it wasn't the sort of thing Frankel might tumble to with a lucky guess.

"Do you think he was really standing naked under a Nazi flag?" I asked Frankel.

He shrugged. "You know Penn," he said.

THE show that Penn and Teller are touring with now might strike the casual theatregoer as more or less the show they brought from Los Angeles to the Westside Arts. Penn and Teller, of course, think of it as something that has changed considerably. Even now, when Teller can say, "At long last, we have a show that I'm very happy with," they treat it as a machine that is in constant need of tuning and adjustment. Is there a line in the MOFO number that is not needed? During their dangerous version of what Penn calls a "wimpy card trick," is he irritating enough to give the audience a split second of guilty satisfaction when he seems to have been stabbed in the hand by the partner he was irritating?

Teller can still analyze the show in terms of the Greek tragic rhythms he learned from David Rosenbaum at Central High School. To him, the first number is the prologue. Penn announces that he will read "Casey at the Bat" while sitting in a chair, and will then leap up to receive his accustomed



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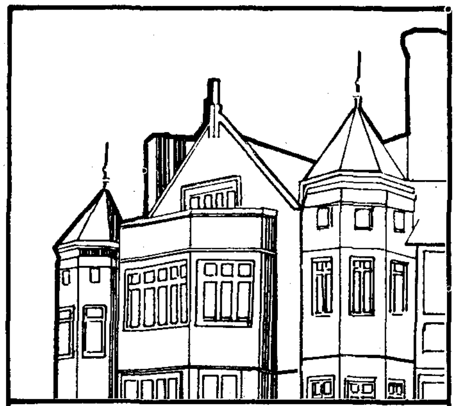

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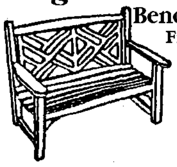

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applause, at which point Teller either will be out of the straitjacket attached to the pulley that is tied to the chair or will be dropped head first onto a bed of huge and obviously authentic spikes. From that number, Teller told me one morning in Boston, "You learn that one guy's going to talk and one guy's not going to talk. You learn that these guys can do things—that there's talk interlocked with action, and that it's action that takes place in the present, in the apparent reality of the theatre. You learn in very plain terms that we don't see any difference between what's named poetry, albeit illustrated by a piece of doggerel, and daredevil, life-and-death stunts. And you learn that these two people absolutely trust each other, because night after night one person willingly and comfortably places himself in the position of being completely subject to the other person's reliability. One of the things this show is implicitly and constantly about is the nature of partnership and friendship."

Teller told me that he considers the remark that Penn makes before pulling out his copy of "Casey at the Bat"—the remark that the magic they're interested in is "the magic of fine poetry"—to be the "topic sentence" of the show. "What the audience learns from the straitjacket and 'Casey at the Bat' is, first, that they're going to see a show that is about poetry," he said. "Although we make fun of that idea again and again, I think that when people leave the theatre at the end they leave with the sense of having seen a sort of poetic event."

"What do you mean by 'poetic'?" I asked.

Teller paused for a long time. Finally, he said, "I would like for people to have the experience I would like to have. Which is for a period of time I would like to have my attention compelled by something that moves me from one place to another, from one feeling to another, from one understanding to another—and hints at mysteries that somehow fit together. When I was a kid in my back yard, almost daily I used to build what I would call a fun house. It was really not very elaborate, but it was almost a compulsion. There were odd pieces of wood in my back yard—things like long planks with four-by-fours nailed to the ends of them so as to form a small table, and assorted things. And I loved to take those things and put them in sequences, so that at each step something surprising as far as I was concerned would happen—so, say, a plank would tip in a different direction. And then I would get kids who lived on my street to come in and walk through it. And I would be right there to catch them if they fell. If they fell down, they didn't usually get hurt. I got hurt wonderfully once. But in my head what was happening was they were going into a fun house in an amusement park—a haunted house that was pretty scary." He paused. His eyes had filled with tears. "And then they'd come out at the other end . . ." He paused again. "You start off at the beginning, and you come out and you feel like you've been someplace. . . . I don't know why I get all weepy over that."

I WAS helping Penn and Teller block out an appearance on a Boston talk show. I played what Penn likes to refer to as "the meat puppet." It's a term he picked up from television cameramen, who invented it as a description of some of the beautiful but vacant people who recite the local news. Most of Penn and Teller's talk-show appearances revolve around making the meat puppet edgy, or even terrified. The plan this time was to engage him in a game of rodent roulette—a game played on a lazy Susan on which Penn and Teller had glued seven or eight huge rat traps. There is a short piece of cord attached to the bar of each of the traps, so you can trip it without worrying about its snapping shut—unless, Penn will explain to the host, you happen to trip the one whose cord has been cut underneath the trap. That one will break your finger.

"Well, welcome to Boston," I said, in my assigned role as host. "I hear your show is wacky, madcap fun. Are you going to do a trick for us today?"

"Tell me," Penn says. "How's your show doing in this market?"

"Well, we're O.K., I guess."

"You creaming the competition?"

"Well, we don't say creaming, actually," I said, aware that I was now the one answering the questions.

"What's next for you after this?" Penn asked, glancing around as if looking for something to break.

"Well, actually, Peoria beckons if we're not careful here," I said.

Deciding that a host in my position must be on top of the world and looking for new thrills, Penn suggested rodent roulette, explaining that we'd take turns putting our fingers into the traps. As the routine works, Teller, taking his second turn, lets out a horrible shriek as blood spurts from his finger onto Penn—the result of a simple squirt-ring filled with stage blood. We did that part, with plain water, twice, since Penn didn't seem to be hit squarely enough in the eye the first time. As Penn was wiping his face after the second squirting, he said "What are we doing here?" and Teller joined in for the ritual chorus: "We're earning a living."

The rodent-roulette routine worked pretty well the next morning. The host turned out to be an amiable and relaxed young man, named Matt Lauer, who didn't panic even when Penn, working up to the suggestion that any thrill-seeking instincts the host had be channelled into the nearly harmless pastime of rodent roulette, said, "I get this premonition of you being found dead in a hot tub with a fourteen-year-old girl." Still, it was, I thought, a long way from the tension and precision and polish of the "Penn & Teller" performance. In general, I think of their television appearances as a mixed bag. So do they—although Penn enjoyed the liberation of the cockroaches on David Letterman's desk, at least more than Letterman appeared to. Penn says that on television "you can only do the grossest strokes." Sometimes even the grossest strokes are not quite caught by the camera. Sometimes the audience doesn't seem to know quite what to make of Penn and Teller; they're out of context. A lot of the problem, I think, is that on television Penn and Teller can't lure the audience into a constant but ever-changing role in the swindle.

I think of Penn and Teller as two acts—the stage performance and everything else. By now, because of their appearances on Letterman and "Saturday Night Live," they are probably better known for everything else. The way show business is organized, of course, their success may be measured by how well they cross over into everything else. They may measure success that way themselves. They worked hard on their video; they've written a book. There are people in the trade

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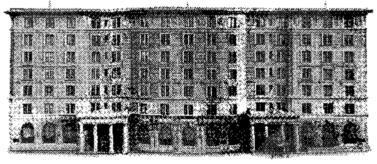

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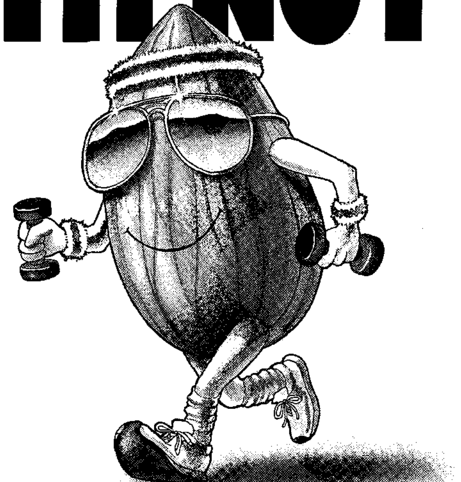

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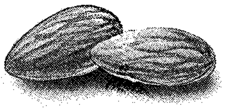

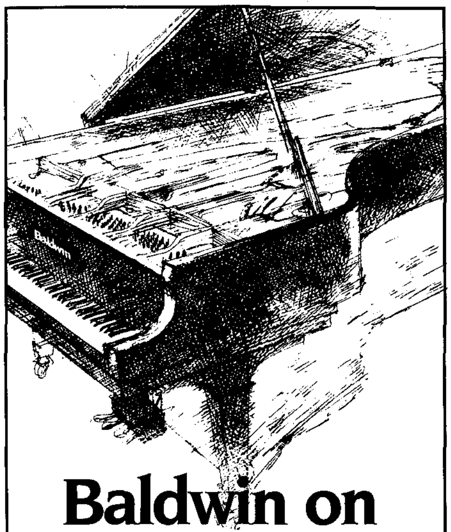

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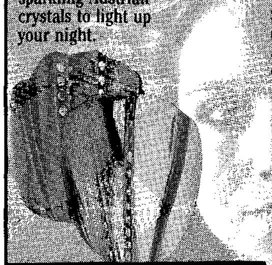

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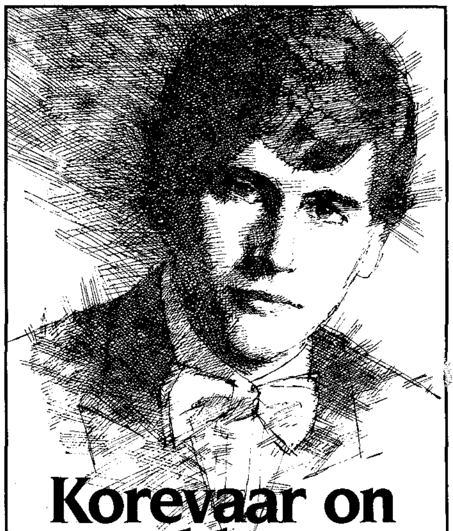
who think Penn and Teller may be too specialized in tone to translate well into other areas of show business, and those people would cite as confirmation the troubles encountered recently by Penn and Teller's most ambitious breakout project—a movie they wrote called "Penn & Teller Get Killed." The movie, directed by Arthur Penn, was scheduled to have been released early this spring, but the word from Hollywood is that studio executives were shocked by its ending and that the audience at its first test showing was distinctly unenchanted. It has now been recut, but it lingers in what a friend of Penn and Teller's calls Hollywood Hell.

As it happens, Penn and Teller love the way the movie came out. The prospect that it may not be the mainstream triumph their supporters had looked forward to does not seem to horrify them. After all, they also measure success by infinitesimal degrees of improvement in the needles trick. In Chicago on the national tour, Penn is still hauling Teller up on a pulley eight performances a week and sitting down to read "Casey at the Bat." Teller says he sees the stage show continuing into the foreseeable future, although, of course, it will change. There might be less magic. Penn, Teller predicts, may get to the point at which he'll be able to admit from the stage that he didn't actually go into the sideshow tent at the Franklin County Fair, and will tell "that much more chilling story that he never did see the fire-eating, *that it was so fascinating* and so fearful from such a distance that he had to go do it instead." Teller says that he and Penn would like to try a stadium show someday, because they're fascinated by the problem "How do you do a theatrical event before an enormous number of people?" They even have a trick in mind, which Teller told me about one day in Boston. It starts with Penn announcing that they were allowed to bring only one prop to the show. At that point, he leaves, and Teller lies down, draping a towel over his chest. Penn reappears with the one prop—an eighteen-wheeler. He drives right over Teller and out of the stadium. "Then I get up and take a bow," Teller said.

"And there are tire marks on the towel?" I asked.

"Absolutely," Teller said. "Absolutely."

—CALVIN TRILLIN



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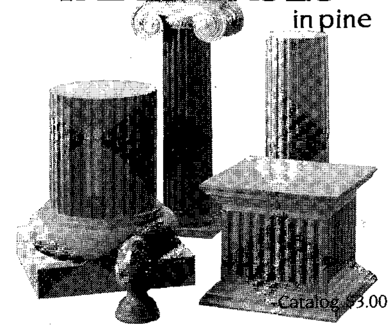

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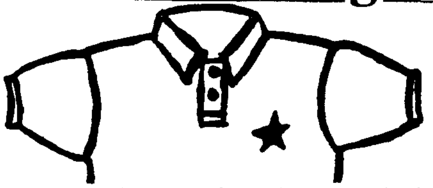

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

MAY 4

THE President's advisers spend a lot of time explaining his Presidency thus far. The explanations are largely, if at times unconsciously, defensive, and all of them get back, by various routes, to one question: the question of why Bush has not made more of an impression on the nation, which, according to the polls, likes him well enough but is not sure where he is trying to go. His first hundred days in office have done little to resolve doubts about Bush's capacity for leadership. He has been pleasant, accessible, energetic (almost frenetic at times). He has reached compromises with Congress on such difficult issues as the budget and aid to the Contras, and proposed a program to deal with the S. & L. disaster, and offered a new approach to Third World debt. He has proposed legislation dealing with education, child care, the minimum wage, and ethics. He has made numerous speeches. So why don't we know where he is trying to go?

That there is a vagueness to Bush's agenda is neither surprising nor new; Bush has all along been vague about what he wanted to do as President, before and after he got the job. His aides insist that he has an agenda, but they tend to describe it differently. The potentially most important rationale for what Bush is trying to do is that he is, as he put it in a speech in mid-March, preparing the nation for the future. In the speech, in Colorado Springs, Bush said, "The essential question today is: What are we doing to prepare for the new world that begins eleven short years from now? That's what my agenda is all about." But there was little urgency or thrust to what he was saying, even though there are matters that urgently need to be addressed. Even the President's explainers concede that he has not got this across as a theme of his Presidency. Part of the problem seems to be that Bush hasn't internalized this theme, and mentions it rarely. Also, neither the President nor his staff seems to have grasped the importance of repetition. Part of it is that, at least as yet, there is little substance in back of the theme. His proposals on education are worthy but paltry. (His budget asked for less for education than Reagan's had.) For the time being, the President is boxed in by his own campaign pledge not to raise taxes. Though there are a couple of people around the President who understand the importance of the "future" theme—of providing ourselves with better-educated people, of addressing the pathologies of the underclass, of regaining our technological eptitude, of cleaning up the environment (or, at least, doing less to pollute it), of rebuilding our crumbling (and dangerous) infrastructure—neither the President nor most of those around him seem to have the imagination or the scope to mold an agenda that makes us feel we are going someplace important. (One of those who do understand the importance of this theme is Richard Darman, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, who thinks more long-range than most people around here.) If a President is unfocussed, the nation can't follow him.

"By the authority vested in me by Bloomingdale's, how may I help you?"

Part of Bush's problem is his own persona, which can't be expected to change much. He never had much of an impact in his various previous roles, didn't leave much of an imprint. Bush is energetic without being dynamic. There is an insubstantialness to him that makes most of his appearances forgettable—pleasant enough but forgettable. He is simply not a very interesting man. If he is to be taken at his word, he hates the idea of "handlers"—though (and perhaps because) he submitted to them willingly in last year's election. Among the results then was that Bush was focussed (and repetitive); he got his themes, whatever we may have thought of them, across. (Has anyone seen him say the Pledge of Allegiance since the election?) Now he is back, at times, to unstructured thoughts and sentences, and his proposals are occasionally lost in the shuffle. Bush could use a little handling now, though it's not clear he has people around him who are up to the task. His child-care proposal was offered virtually in the dead of night: a press release was embellished by a statement by White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater in order to keep it from being completely buried. Bush's aides vowed to do better, so the education proposals were offered in a Rose Garden ceremony, where Bush honored the Teacher of the Year, but the contrived nature of the scene showed, and not much was being proposed, so Bush still didn't get much attention. Bush's announcement that the United States would join the worldwide movement to reduce the amount of chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere was made in the course of an event on another subject, so few even knew that he had done it. His four-day swing around the country last week seemed like travel without a purpose; he and his staff seem to revert to campaigning when they can't think of what else to do. In mid-April, Bush announced a new policy of economic help for Poland, in light of the extraordinary agreement in early April between the Polish government and Solidarity to give government recognition to Solidarity and hold parliamentary elections. But the importance of this change in United States policy was diminished by the way Bush and his staff decided to announce it: in a campaign-style event in the heavily Polish city of Hamtramck, Michigan, with Bush posing with youngsters in Polish native costumes.

Last week's trip took Bush to six states, where he participated in more than a dozen events and talked about a wide variety of subjects. Because Bush rarely says anything very interesting in his speeches, they receive little television coverage and therefore little national attention—at the point in a Presidency when a President should be getting attention and building public support for rocky days ahead. The event that got the most coverage during the four-day trip was Bush's meeting with Ronald Reagan. The disorganization of the trip and the poor notices it got in the press caused some dissension within Bush's staff, some of whom hold John Sununu, the chief of staff, responsible. (The Washington *Post* reported this week that Sununu had chewed out senior White House aides for airing in public their complaints about the lack of focus in the trip, which he thought had gone just fine, and about the lack of a coherent strategy for presenting Bush's message. Sununu reportedly argued that the only problem the Bush Administration has is that it hasn't been defended energetically enough. This is not a good sign.) Sununu's lack of national, or even any big-time, experience shows at times, and there is a price for his insistence on being perpetually at the President's side. Since Sununu is supposed to be running the White House, and has no strong deputy or colleague, his being glued to the President (he's in a lot of the pictures) means that other things aren't getting done or getting attention.

One of Bush's advisers makes the absolutely fair point that some of the criticism of Bush stems from an acceptance of Reagan's Presidency (and some folk memory of it) as the standard. A press corps that used to complain about being manipulated by the Reagan White House came to question why the Bush White House was not manipulating it—or, at least, not doing it very well. If Reagan had been too inaccessible, Bush was being too accessible; if the Reagan White House had worked hard to control the story, the Bush White House too often lets the press decide what the story is. If the Reagan White House placed too much emphasis on stage management, on the scenery (the beaches at Normandy, the 38th Parallel in South Korea), the Bush White House places too little on it. The folk memory has Reagan controlling the agenda far more than he actually did. Thus, Bush's advisers have argued, it has taken some time for Washington to get used to this different-style Presidency. And at the same time that people here were questioning Bush's Presidential style they were finding certain aspects of it most welcome. The lessening of turmoil, of *Sturm und Drang*, has come as a relief after eight turbulent years. Many members of Congress find Bush's emphasis on bipartisanship a pleasant change (though a number of Republicans think this is no way to use the Presidency). Bush's relative openness is refreshing, and the fact that he does actually grasp some issues, or can talk about them with apparent knowledge, strikes awe in many people here (but Bush is no deep thinker).

Some Bush aides attribute his lack of impact to the fact that there are no great domestic or international crises by which he could define himself. One of his advisers said to me not long ago, "What would an F.D.R. do in a situation like this?" The latest explanation by some Bush people of why the President hasn't defined his agenda better is that in his first weeks in office he was preoccupied with dealing with some large problems left on his desk by Reagan. An adviser says that proposals for dealing with the safety and environmental problems at plants that make nuclear-weapons material (the manufacture of the material has been halted) are due soon. (Despite their denials to Reagan loyalists, the Bush people have little reluctance to allocate to Reagan whatever blame they find convenient.) According to this explanation, Bush's having to devote much of his time thus far to the problems of the savings and loans, to striking bargains with Congress on Central America and the budget—all problems left by Reagan—kept him from getting on with his own agenda. But this explanation is an after-the-fact, and only partial, one.

The way some of these problems were dealt with is instructive about the Bush style of governing. In the case of the Contras and the budget, Bush accepted short-term deals, of questionable substance, and bought at least temporary peace. The deal on Contra aid ceded the kind of power to Congress that Bush, in another day, would have been highly critical of. (The deal is that military aid to the Contras will be forgone for now, and humanitarian aid will be continued through February, 1990, but cannot be continued after this November without the approval of four congressional committees.) The deal was also internally inconsistent, because at the same time that the Contras were being kept alive as a supposed threat to the Sandinista regime if it didn't adopt democratic reforms, there was an ever-diminishing possibility that the Contras could actually constitute that threat. However, by adopting the compromise (negotiated with the various factions in Congress by Secretary of State James Baker) Bush bought time, and even got the blessing of Oscar Arias, the President of Costa Rica, who, along with other Central American heads of state, had been pressing for a diplomatic approach to the Nicaragua problem. In fact, the Administration was playing catch-up with the Central American leaders, who, in February, caught it off guard by adopting a proposal for disarming the Contras and dismantling their bases in Honduras and repatriating them in

Nicaragua; in exchange, the Sandinistas were to release certain political prisoners and to hold elections early next year. The unprecedented role given the congressional committees in this agreement was what set off Boyden Gray, the White House counsel, who publicly raised his concern that this part of the agreement was unconstitutional. What got the most attention here was that Gray had the temerity—many thought it stupidity—to take on the sainted and powerful Baker publicly (the two were already not the best of friends, as a result of Gray's taking issue, publicly, with Baker's holding of bank stocks); what got far less attention was the point that Gray, however awkward, was probably right. The child-care proposal and the proposal to raise the minimum wage, though Bush had mentioned them in his campaign, were offered in reaction to the congressional Democrats' pushing their own proposals in this area. Bush is often reacting.

Certain events have also raised a question about Bush's instincts. He was slow in responding to the public outcry over the use of semi-automatic weapons, which have contributed to the drug-related slaughter going on in Washington and elsewhere. The outcry was actually more a result of the killing of five schoolchildren in Stockton, California, in January, by a man using an AK-47. Bush's first response, during a photo opportunity in mid-February, was to say, "I'm not about to suggest that a semi-automated hunting rifle be banned. Absolutely not." Later, Bush, with the prodding of William Bennett, the "drug czar," placed a temporary ban on AK-47s, imported from China, and then expanded this to other types of imported semi-automatics. Domestically made semi-automatics were still acceptable. One adviser attributes Bush's change of position to his seeing such rifles demonstrated on television and realizing that they didn't look like hunting weapons. Also, he had met with police chiefs who argued for the ban of such weapons because they were putting the police in increased jeopardy. Another adviser was more to the point: "A lot of people in this country have come to feel that banning those guns is more important because of the drug-related murders. They changed their view and therefore he changed his view."

Even some of Bush's advisers now concede that his reaction to the oil spill off the Alaska coast was slow in coming and lacked any sense of outrage. There has been some discussion of how to tune up the White House mechanism so as to avoid such bobbles in the future, but the problem may be less one of mechanics than one of a lack of political feel. Bush's fumbling on the oil spill damaged him in one field that he has said, with some apparent conviction, matters to him and in which he had been receiving good reviews: the environment. (During his swing around the nation, a speech on the environment, scheduled for California, was replaced by speeches on numerous other topics. In Silicon Valley, he said, "Look, I want to give the high-five symbol to high-tech.")

ANOTHER sort of ooze has been gradually approaching Bush's ankles: the Iran-Contra affair. The conviction of Oliver North today on three counts did nothing to spare Bush: the trial raised new questions about Bush's role in the Iran-Contra affair, and there are more trials, and perhaps more revelations, to come. The counts were: obstructing a congressional inquiry (by participating in the preparation of false chronologies about the arms sales to Iran); concealing, altering, and destroying documents—after the news broke that funds from the arms sales had been diverted to aid to the Contras; and receiving an illegal gratuity, in the form of a security fence purchased by Richard Secord, one of North's private facilitators in the Iran-Contra affair. North was acquitted on charges of lying to Congress in the course of the Iran-Contra affair, of obstructing Attorney General Edwin Meese's inquiry after the story broke, and of other financial misdeeds.

Evidence produced in the North trial indicated deeper involvement on the part of Bush in getting aid for the Contras from third countries at a time when such aid had been prohibited by Congress than he has ever admitted. The evidence also suggests that Reagan was more directly involved in getting this aid than he has ever admitted: he told the Tower commission, the first group to examine the Iran-Contra affair, that he didn't know about or have a role in getting money for the Contras from third countries. There was also evidence in the course of the trial that the Reagan White House had

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withheld key documents from the Iran-Contra committees established by Congress to look into the whole affair.

There has all along been reason to believe that both men were more deeply involved than they had let on. Reagan's famous disengagedness was not complete, and also provided him some cover. He was intensely interested both in getting the hostages back and in getting military aid to the Contras no matter what Congress said. According to one document, Baker, then White House chief of staff, had warned Secretary of State George Shultz in 1984 that seeking help for the Contras from third countries during the congressional ban would be an "impeachable offense," and Shultz passed this warning along at a White House meeting of national-security officials and the President. According to the documents, Reagan himself said at the White House meeting, in June, 1984, that if word leaked about the discussion in that meeting of third-party Contra support to circumvent the congressional ban, "we'll all be hanging by our thumbs in front of the White House until we find out who did it." There was, as a result of the congressional hearings, strong reason to believe that Reagan knew about the diversion of profits from the arms sales to military aid for the Contras.

Bush's involvement in the Iran-Contra affair has never been seriously addressed. The congressional committees decided that they had enough hot political items on their plate, and that investigating the role of Bush, who clearly was going to run for the Presidency, might look too political. But Donald Gregg, Bush's national-security adviser, had dealings in the course of these events with Felix Rodriguez, a Cuban-born adventurer who was involved in getting military aid to the Contras during the congressional ban, and Rodriguez had three meetings with Bush: Rodriguez told the congressional committees that the two men had discussed his "counter-insurgency efforts in Central America." Bush and Gregg—and Rodriguez, for that matter—came from the labyrinthine world of the C.I.A., where covert dealings and complex networks, and deception, are the accepted ways of doing business. (Rodriguez told the congressional committees that he could recall discussing with Gregg all but one item listed in Gregg's notes; it said, "a swap of weapons for $.") All last year, Bush weaved and dodged questions about his role in the Iran-Contra affair. (The North trial did turn up a postcard Bush sent to North around Thanksgiving of 1985, on which he wrote, "Your dedication and hard work on the hostage thing and in Central America gives me cause for great thanks. Get some turkey." By this time, two shipments of missiles had been made to Iran, ostensibly by the Israelis, and one hostage, Benjamin Weir, had been released. North's real role in getting help to the Contras during the congressional ban did not come to light until the following year.)

On the Friday in early April when Bush held a press conference to announce that he was putting the Coast Guard in charge of the clean-up of the oil spill and making the military available—two weeks after the spill—he was, from the outset, peppered with questions about the new evidence that had come out at the trial (that he had gone to Honduras to assure it of United States help if it continued to harbor and help the Contras), but he insisted that he could have no comment while the trial was proceeding. It is unlikely that he will have much comment now that the trial is concluded. Though, at the instigation of some Democrats, the House and Senate Intelligence Committees are investigating why certain key documents didn't reach the Iran-Contra committees (now disbanded), and questions are being raised in Congress about whether foreign aid had been used, contrary to law, as an enticement for Honduras to help the Contras, with Bush as the go-between, Congress does not at this point appear to have the stomach for revisiting the Iran-Contra affair at any length. The issue isn't fashionable now. Today, Bush testily told the press that, in the case of Honduras, "there was no quid pro quo," but, even if so, this does not end the questions about his role. The issue of whether there was an explicit quid pro quo is another example (like whether the President knew about the diversion) of over-narrowing a question.

MAURICE FREED

Bush's advisers say that with the number of scheduled foreign-policy events to come—James Baker's trip to the Soviet Union next week, the NATO summit meeting in Brussels in late May, and the economic summit in Paris in mid-July—Bush will have an opportunity to play on the world stage. Thus far, the Administration has been slow in its response to the challenges offered by Gorbachev—to the extent that it has reacted at all. And now the Administration is struggling with a crisis within NATO over Germany's desire, supported by other Europeans but firmly opposed by Bush and Margaret Thatcher, to begin negotiations with the Soviet Union over short-range nuclear missiles. The problem is that, whatever the merits of the Administration's case, it is in the position of reacting to Gorbachev and seeming to be less interested than the Soviets—and a great many Europeans—in reducing the number of nuclear weapons that remain in Europe. Today, under pressure from Congress and NATO allies, Bush indicated he might compromise on some NATO language about the issue, but he didn't seem ready to compromise on the issue itself.

A Bush adviser says, with validity, that what matters to the public is results—how a President does on arms control, on the economy—rather than how well the White House is functioning or how well the President's trips were advanced, which he dismisses as inside stuff. He is correct, up to a point. "Inside stuff," as it becomes magnified and also affects the results, can become "outside stuff." How well a President uses his first months in office both tells us a lot about him and indicates how deep a base of support he has built for rougher times ahead; Bush's does not appear to be very deep. And then this adviser, after defending the President's first hundred days, said, "I'm not sure that the second hundred days won't be stronger than the first."

THE chief difference between the make-believe budget agreement reached in mid-April (the statutory deadline) by the White House and Congress and those reached in previous years is that the new one is even more imaginative than its predecessors. One effect of the Gramm-Rudman law, passed in 1985, has been to put pressure on the Administration and Congress to keep reducing the deficit; the other effect is an enhanced creativity on the part of all concerned in order to meet the Gramm-Rudman targets—or, at least, appear to meet them. The actual result each year has been far off the stipulated target. In 1987, Congress moved back by a year the target (a silly one, but few politicians feel they can admit this) of a balanced budget, now set for fiscal year 1993. The current fiscal year, which goes to the end of September, was supposed to have the deficit down to a hundred and thirty-six billion dollars, when it is actually a hundred and sixty-three billion dollars. In fact, the deficit has increased in the last two years. After Congress tried to (as the terminology goes) put Bush in a box, forcing him to say exactly how he would cut the deficit without raising taxes and without cutting politically popular programs, and the Bush Administration tried to put Congress in a box by evading the question of which domestic programs would be cut and leaving Congress with the unpleasant task of finding the money, the two sides climbed into the box together and cut a deal.

Predictably, Congress ended up colluding with the Administration in projecting unrealistic economic trends in order to make the numbers come out right: using more realistic figures would force harder choices. The agreement includes some onetime savings, which will have no effect (if they happen at all) on future deficits. The numbers were jiggled around in other ways as well, in order to show "savings." Two billion dollars was "saved" in spending on agriculture programs by moving it from next year's budget to this year's. (This is an egregious variation on an old trick.) The two-billion-dollar deficit that the Postal Service is running was saved by—presto!—removing the Postal Service from the budget. (The hundred and sixty-seven billion that it is now estimated that the bail-out of the S. & L.s will cost will also be kept off the budget, for the sake of appearances.) The Peter Pans who run this country made everything turn out fine. The problem was that the obvious ruses that had been resorted to were seen through immediately, and the budget didn't receive a welcome reception in the press. Lloyd Bentsen, who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and who remembers last year's Presidential campaign, boycotted the Rose Garden ceremony, featuring the President surrounded by House and Senate leaders and the chairmen of the relevant committees, extolling—to varying degrees—the budget agreement. Some Administration officials remain annoyed with Bentsen for not playing along, and hint darkly that he probably wants to run for President.

Richard Darman, the budget director, was quick to call the agreement "a manageable step," and has been letting it be known around town that he intends to seek a subsequent agreement later this year on the next (fiscal 1991) budget, which under the Gramm-Rudman law must hold the deficit to sixty-four billion dollars. The Administration and the congressional leaders were able to pretend to meet the fiscal 1990 target without making politically unpopular cuts and without raising significant new taxes, but few think that they can do this for the next fiscal year. The agreement for 1990 called for $5.3 billion in new taxes, leaving the details to be worked out. The President insists that this money can be raised by lowering the capital-gains tax, but this is a highly debatable proposition, and, anyway, the Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee have indicated they wouldn't go along with it (Bentsen is skeptical). In response, the budget summiteers suggested that the money be found through closing loopholes, but as of now the tax-writing committees are unenthusiastic, and say that there is not all that much money to be raised that way, and that, anyway, the money that is raised wouldn't show up in time to help this year's budget. (Changes in the tax law are not ordinarily put into effect before the next tax year, in order to avoid chaos.)

There has been some talk of a deal in which the Republicans would trade support for an increase in the gasoline tax in exchange for Democratic support for the capital-gains reduction. But this idea has already been dumped on by some key Democrats who don't think that Republican credit for lowering taxes on the rich in exchange for Democratic "credit" for raising taxes on the poor is such a good deal.

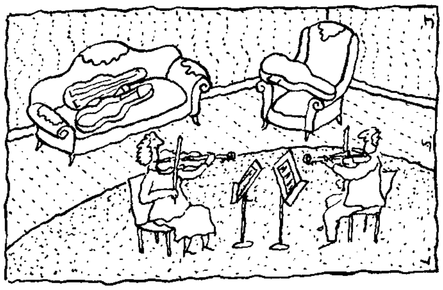
There is talk now that nothing significant will happen on taxes in this fiscal year (the budget agreement took care of that) but that the whole question of taxes would be considered for the 1991 budget, with the President becoming a willing participant in raising taxes at the same time that the Democrats accept significant cuts in entitlement programs, such as Social Security. This seems to be what Darman has in mind. (Darman used to try to wheel Reagan around, too.) The theory is that each party would give the other cover: the Democrats would refrain from attacking the Republicans for voting to cut Social Security, and the Republicans would refrain from attacking the Democrats for supporting tax increases. The Congress, the theory goes, would prefer to take the hard steps this year rather than next year, an election year, but political memories, and retribution, go back more than one year. And neither side is likely to trust that the other will lay off —and not run ads against it—when the elections come around; Democrats, who mainly live in fear these days, certainly don't think that Lee Atwater, the chairman of the Republican Party and a self-designated enfant terrible, or Edward Rollins, another tough talker, who has taken charge of getting more Republicans elected to Congress, will leave them alone. (An Administration strategist notes that though the Democrats keep insisting that they won't move on taxes unless the President does, they keep proposing tax increases, and are already identified with them.)

Darman argues that the process of reaching the agreement for fiscal 1990, whatever the agreement's limitations, was better than not reaching an agreement and established a basis of trust and coöperation among the negotiators for taking the next, harder steps. (Darman, of course, argues that the budget agreement is better than its reviews suggest.) It is apparently Darman's hope that Congress can be embarrassed into confronting the next fiscal year this year: to those who say the agreement just reached doesn't go far enough, the reply can be, So let's do the next one and go further; Congress may have trouble agreeing on how to raise the required $5.3 billion; this summer, Darman, in compliance with the Gramm-Rudman law, will be announcing a new set of economic assumptions, and he could make them realistic enough to scare Congress into thinking it must take further action. Darman hopes that the periodic need to have Congress raise the statutory ceiling on the national debt—which will occur again this summer—will give him an opportunity, and Congress cover, to take serious action to reduce the deficit. A number of members are threatening to withhold their votes to raise the debt ceiling (and let the government continue to function and the Social Security checks go out) until there is serious deficit reduction. But they've threatened this before. There seems to be some gamesmanship involved in Darman's scheme (there usually is): by relaying the word that he hopes for a more dramatic agreement this year, Darman mitigates the criticism of the one already reached; and if Congress resists taking more dramatic action it can also take the blame for not doing so. For this grand plan to work, some of the laws of human nature—and political behavior—would have to be repealed. As a House Democratic aide put it, "Each year you don't do it, it becomes less likely that you'll do it the next year. The need seems to diminish each year. If you don't do it this year, why would you do it next year? And if it's that important to be done, why don't you do it this year?"

THE Jim Wright affair has moved to the middle burner while further allegations about Wright are pursued by the House ethics committee, and Wright's lawyer and the committee's outside counsel negotiate over how the next phase—a hearing on the alleged violations that have been adopted by the committee—will proceed, and while Wright gears up for his defense. Wright has been advised by Texans and a few other friends around town (most of his friends are Texans) to strengthen his legal defense team, and to keep quiet. One of his advisers said to me last week, of the advice to keep quiet, "It's not clear he'll take that advice. When you have thirty-five years of public service at stake, it's hard to stay out of sight." The advice to Wright to remain silent is based on the delicate point that he is not a particularly winning figure on television; for the time being, Wright has mostly accepted it and is said to have all but decided to request that the hearing, which is not expected to begin before late this month, not be televised. Wright's friends seem to believe that his main problem is one of public relations, but his troubles go deeper than that. Wright has taken steps to broaden his legal team. His attorney for the case so far, William Oldaker, doesn't have appellate experience, which will be required in the next stage, and has also been criticized by some of Wright's friends for not defending him well enough. Wright has brought aboard the eminent, elegant, and shrewd Clark Clifford, who, at eighty-two, is one of this city's icons. When Clifford speaks for Wright, in his mellifluous fashion, members of Congress will listen. Clifford will not be on the case full time, but his mere joining it sent a signal to the House.

The Wright strategy for now is to try to undermine Richard Phelan, the ethics committee's outside counsel, who played the key role in persuading the committee to bring the charges it did against Wright. A friend of Wright's says, "He's looking for someone to take Phelan on. That's what he really wants." The goal is to narrow as much as possible the charges, so that as few as possible are taken to the House floor. Phelan, according to his own report to the committee, would have gone further than the committee did. But his report seems at several points to be reaching to make a case against Wright, and the tone of it is prosecutorial, as well as scornful, the tone of a man determined to bring the Speaker down. There is a strong suspicion, including on the part of House members who have no affection for Wright, that Phelan swept the committee along, leading it further than existing precedents would justify. (Phelan did work hard to persuade committee members to adopt his point of view.) So Wright's allies are painting Phelan as an "outsider," who doesn't understand politics or how the institution of the House works, and there is some truth to that.

A key part of the Wright strategy is to challenge the legal basis for most of the charges brought against him: to question the committee's novel interpretation of who has a "direct interest" in legislation, as it held that Wright's friend and benefactor George Mallick did; to challenge the committee's allegations that some of the things Mallightco, the company formed by the Wrights and the Mallicks, gave Mrs. Wright—a salary, a car, free use of a condo—were gifts (the car, which Mrs. Wright took to Washington after she left Mallightco's employ, is acknowledged by Wright's allies as the hardest part); to argue that the committee is on weak legal ground in citing Wright for trying to get around the House limits on income from honoraria through bulk sales of his book, "Reflections of a Public Man." Wright's case will be that the rules make a flat exemption for royalties. A congressman who stands by Wright says of the ethics committee, "They have some real legal holes in their case. The question is, Will they listen to that? That's why Clark Clifford has been asked to play a role—someone on the Speaker's side has to make them listen." But Wright's case has gone beyond legalisms. When the committee issued its report a couple of weeks ago, the chairman, Julian Dixon, Democrat of California, said, "Members of Congress do not exist in a vacuum and should be expected to have personal friends with whom gifts can be exchanged." He went on, "However, the nature and extent of the apparent gifts from Mr. Mallick indicates that Representative Wright did not exercise reasonable care to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, which is the hallmark of the House gift rule."

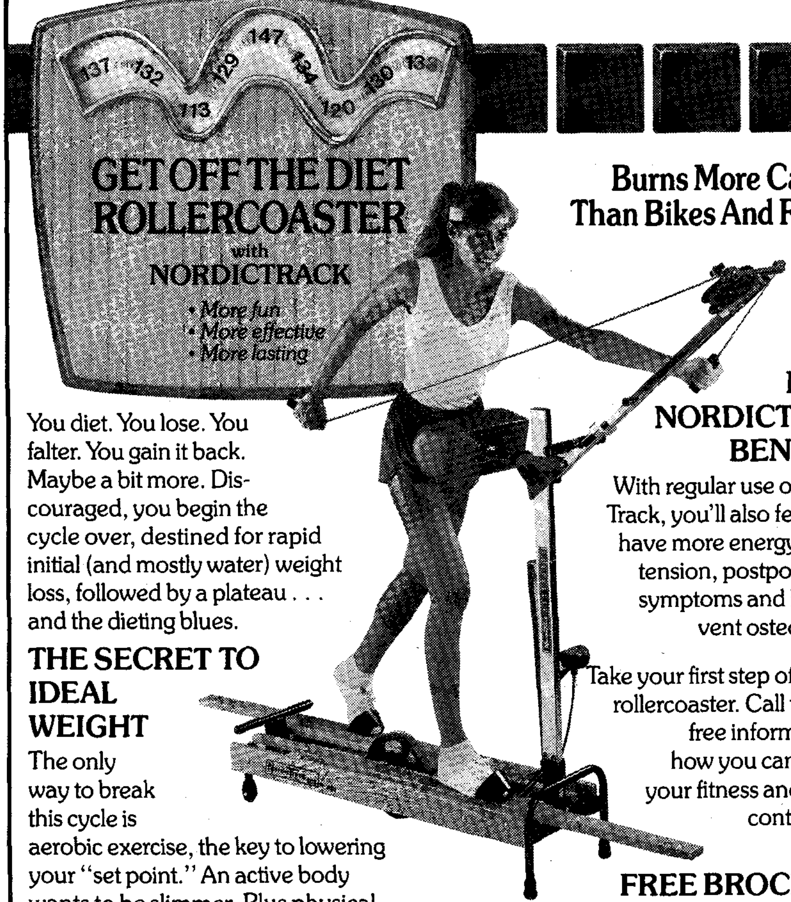


Meanwhile, things have not been going wonderfully for Wright: as happens in cases like this, new evidence of real or apparent misconduct keeps surfacing. In recent days, there have been reports of Wright's using, gratis, the private plane of one of the freewheeling Texans in the savings-and-loan business; the plane's owner got into some legal problems over his S. & L. dealings, and though the committee brought no charges against Wright on the subject of S. & L.s, his heavy-handed dealings with federal regulators and his holding up legislation to crack down on S. & L.s are part of the penumbra hanging over him. (Last week, after inquiries by the *Wall Street Journal*, Wright's reëlection committee wrote out a check to cover the cost of the use of the plane—nearly four years after the fact. It said that the failure to pay earlier was an "oversight.") This week, it was reported that in 1985 Wright put in the *Congressional Record* a statement extolling a motivational videotape being sold by a company that at the time employed his wife. The committee is still investigating Mallightco's purchase and sale (for a handsome profit) of an oil well, called the Sabine Lake project. And today the Washington *Post* resurrected, with vivid new detail, an old story about one of Wright's top aides, John Mack, having bludgeoned and slashed a young woman in 1973, when he was nineteen. After two years in a county jail, Mack was hired by Wright. (At the time, Mack was the brother of Wright's son-in-law.) Rollins wasted no time in making use of this story. The Republican Congressional Campaign Committee put out a press release saying, "According to the *Post*, Mack is Speaker Wright's right-hand man. According to court records, that 'right hand' in 1973 'grabbed a hammer and slammed it into (his victim's) skull.' " And the release continued with the lurid details of the attack, as described in the *Post*.

Wright's only comfort could have come from the hard time his nemesis, Newt Gingrich, Republican of Georgia and the man who first brought the charges against him, had last week explaining to the press his own odd book deal, in which some businessmen put up a hundred thousand dollars to promote the book, with Gingrich's wife receiving eleven thousand five hundred dollars for her efforts to promote it. (When the book didn't sell, the partners in this investment took a tax loss.) That Gingrich had had his own unusual arrangement for selling a book—one that benefitted his wife, to boot—and then brought charges against Wright for his book deal is at least a little bit peculiar. But Gingrich, having caused Wright so much trouble, is on a high now, and his talk about "corruption" in Congress and in the Democratic Party and in all big cities has taken on the character of ranting.

Wright has been stymied in his attempt to get a quick resolution of his fate. He is attempting to appear to be running the House as if nothing were wrong, but that isn't working, either.

—ELIZABETH DREW



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THE THEATRE

Family Portrait

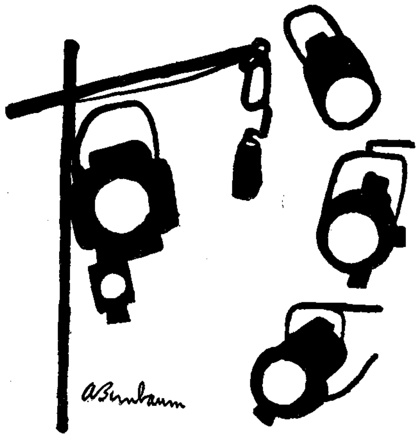
HAPPY families are not a bit alike; few families, happy or unhappy, could be as good company or as worthy of your attention through two acts as Wallace and Charlotte Blossom and their children, Turner and Pony, of Tina Howe's new, free-form comedy, "Approaching Zanzibar," at the Second Stage. That "Approaching Zanzibar" is a comedy with serious undertones need hardly be said to anyone familiar with Miss Howe's work, or that it takes the audience by surprise time after time. It opens in the Blossoms' car; the kids are raising hell in the back seat, and Charlotte, in front, is picking on Wallace's driving, which provokes an explosion. He stops the car, they switch places, and everyone settles down to a game of Geography. They are driving from the East to New Mexico, hoping to be in time to say goodbye to a great-aunt of Charlotte's, an artist, who is dying of cancer. The play is about, among other abstract nouns, death and love and birth and, in a sense, rebirth. Most of its scenes are at stopoffs along the way. In the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, a man describes the scenery to his three-week-old infant. A grandmother suggests to the Blossoms that they allow her grandson to take snapshots of all of them, and the child lines them up, then starts signing to the old woman, having given no previous indication of deafness. In a mountain stream in North Carolina, Wallace instructs his small son in the art of fly-fishing, with infinite patience, but when he fouls his own line he becomes so furious that fishing ends. In the middle of the night, in the Smoky Mountains, the parents sneak out of the tent for a little privacy, leaving the sleeping children alone; they awaken and are terrified, but then calm down and go off for a walk on their own.

Synopsis serves no purpose, and the risk of spoiling surprises essential to the show is too great. What sticks in the mind are the spurts of comedy and the sudden depths, and the children's acceptance of, and even relish for, their parents' temperaments (Wallace is a composer) and eccentricities, and the parents' acceptance of the children, no matter how they behave. At a time when family love is in rather low repute, it is hard to think of a stronger, less sentimental representation of it. At one point, back in the car, the citizens of the front seat exchange imitations with those of the back, and one realizes that nobody has missed a trick. What pervades the show is Miss Howe's originality and the purity of her dramatic imagination: there is not one false note in the play. Nor is there one false note in the production, under Carole Rothman's direction. Harris Yulin's humorous, affectionate, edgy Wallace sets the tone for the entire performance; Jane Alexander is exactly right as Charlotte; Clayton Barclay Jones and Angela Goethals are fine as the children; Bethel Leslie plays the great-aunt with a spirit unusual in the dying; and everybody else does well, too. All praise for Heidi Landesman's settings, as lighted by Dennis Parichy, and for Susan Hilferty's costumes.

—EDITH OLIVER

Without Words

SOME years ago, an Englishman who had once had occasion to visit America was extolling to me the virtues of New York City. He was a parochial fellow but broadminded in his way—at any rate, he thought so—and to signal his broadmindedness he made his peroration something about the roller skaters in Central Park. (This was in the seventies.) He said they were "fantastic," and from the proprietorial way he said it you could tell that he didn't understand the first thing about roller skaters, Central Park, or where the two converged. Also, in commenting on a New York phenomenon, he was sentimentalizing it; and this, as every city dweller knows, is against the rules. You do not try to make the runners or the cyclists or the street musicians or the mime artists and break dancers or Zabar's or the lurid colors in which the Empire State Building is clad at various times of the year a subject of conversation. You do not romanticize them, although, assuredly, you take them in.



That's how I look at things, anyway. I'd be one of the last people to grow misty-eyed over a show—like Bill Irwin's "Largely New York," at the St. James—that uses break dancers, rap music, performance artists, and mime to epitomize New York. I'm down on New York in any case just now, as I think pretty much everyone is. The point about Bill Irwin & Friends, the creative team behind "Largely New York," is that, no matter how jaded or negative you're feeling about New York, their show makes you feel better. It puts onstage all the conflicts, tensions, anxieties, and antagonisms of life in the city—perhaps primary among them racism and our consciousness and fear of racism—and resolves them by means of an invented language. That's the first thing to be said about it. The second thing is that the people who would be the least inclined to see "Largely New York," who would expect it to be engaging but fundamentally uninteresting (because it is without words), are the very ones who would probably get the most out of it. Many of us think of clowns and mime as essentially boring, as dealing in sentiment rather than ideas. But "Largely New York" is very much about ideas. For all its wordlessness, it has what may be the best "book" of any show on Broadway.

The lack of speech provides an element of tour de force: though "Largely New York" is carried on without words, it has all the traditional ingredients of conventional drama. It has a plot—with exposition, complication, climax, and dénouement—and a cast of characters whose individual concerns and relation to one another form the substance of the main action; it even has a subplot. The principal characters are a post-Modern Hoofer (played by Mr. Irwin, in the baggy suit, white tie,

"You look extra outdoorsy today."

• •

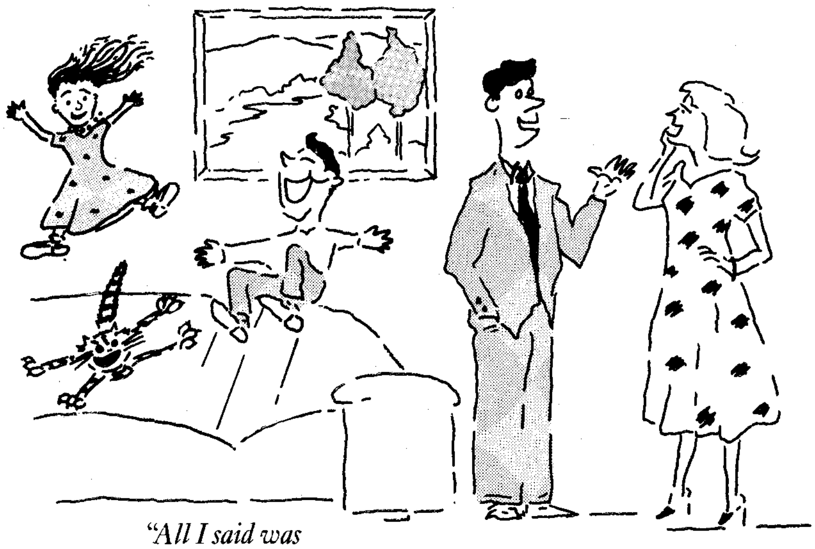
top hat, and oversized glasses of an old vaudevillian), a modern dancer of the Merce Cunningham school (Margaret Eginton), and a couple of break dancers—the "Poppers," one black, one Hispanic (Leon Chesney and Steve Clemente). There is also a troupe of avant-garde performance artists complete with camcorder and video monitor, and a herd of academics wandering in and out. There is a love interest: Mr. Irwin takes a shine to the modern dancer. But the main plot has to do with stage space and the question of who should monopolize it—a point that creates a certain amount of tension in the theatre. The break dancers, after a few uneasy moments, become a clear audience favorite. The Hoofer, who assesses, admires, envies, and gingerly tries to emulate them, comes to favor the modern dancer. The herd of academics provides an unsettling element, because for much of the time we don't know what they're doing there, and the performance artists nearly always come as an unwelcome intrusion.

Meanwhile, the subplot, having to do with inanimate objects, has been set in motion. Each of the soloists or groups is involved with a box of some sort: a box that music comes out of, a box to put things in, a box that records or reflects one's image. Mr. Irwin has a steamer trunk; he also carries around a little black job with an antenna, with which he attempts to control the technical side of things: music, lights, and the raising and lowering of curtains. The Poppers are devoted to their boom box. The rehearsing dancer is monitoring her work with the aid of video equipment, and video is an essential part of the piece being performed by the downtown artistes. The academics—the only characters who are not preoccupied with a machine—shuffle about the stage with a large, flat attaché case and with expressions of glazed inquisitiveness on their faces.

What the language of the direction and the choreography begins to make clear is that each of the modes of performance being shown is fundamentally solipsistic or reductive. The break dancers are popping to a rap song about a rap artist; the modern dancer and the performance artists have become their own audiences. As for Mr. Irwin, his efforts to control the theatrical environment are aimed toward getting to the point where he can dabble in a little outdated soft-shoe. (The scholars have their own agenda, about which I think I should remain vague.) The evening is full of virtuosity. Mr. Irwin's *acting*—the relationships he establishes with the other characters onstage and also with what they represent (high culture, street culture, media and the culture of narcissism, the life of the mind)—is the mime equivalent of the lines in a comedy of manners. The Messrs. Chesney and Clemente at one point simulate everything happening on a baseball field during a single play. One of the academics (Jeff Gordon, here designated the Dean) keeps falling off the stage, and there is something Penn & Teller-ish about the way, having performed the stunt once, when nobody expected it, he makes the feat even more impressive by showing us how it's done. Ultimately, though, it's Irwin's rejection of virtuosity for its own sake that gives "Largely New York" its depth.

"Largely New York" isn't so much a celebration of New York as a debate about art. The show makes reference to aspects of life in the city—violence (a series of bodies piling up mysteriously behind a curtain), the housing problem (Mr. Irwin walking downstairs in his duplex trunk)—but New York is the context of the piece rather than its subject. And context is all-important, given the kind of writer and performer Mr. Irwin is. Each of the famous clowns and mimes Irwin sometimes evokes—Chaplin, Keaton, Harpo Marx, Marcel Marceau—had a single persona: specific, unique, and recognizable. Irwin has a dozen—or, rather, he has no persona at all other than an interest in being chameleon. This means that his "act" tends to be about his relationship with an environment or an inanimate object; in fact, what makes "Largely New York" the quintessential Irwin show is the way it seems to turn all of New York into an inanimate object.

Context is also at the root of the New Vaudevillian ethos: you present movement-in-concert in a way that isn't art—or not high art, anyway—yet somehow manages to be about the whole world or all of life. "Largely New York" seems to me to be more about theatre and the failure of theatrical technology than about technology-in-the-modern-world. The show, which is playing across the street from "The Phantom of the Opera," begins with a sendup of theatrical technology



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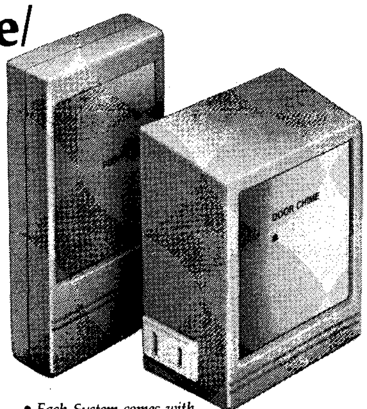

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(Mr. Irwin's little black box creates havoc and seems to usher in all sorts of strange personalities and performers) and culminates in the abduction of a beautiful young woman. That the hoofer becomes the medium through which all the disparate and antagonistic entities in the show are harmonized is in no sense a retrograde statement. Irwin makes it clear that the hoofer and his traditions don't suffice by themselves, any more than the TV-centered antics of the avant-garde do. It takes the energized involvement of the audience to effect the final resolution, and that's where wordlessness comes into its own. The absence of speech requires the spectator to volunteer himself as an imaginative participant in the action, just as radio drama used to command imaginative involvement when words were all there was.

One could go through the show and explicate point by point the views about theatre and art which "Largely New York" puts forward, but not without cheapening them. Articulated in any idiom other than the one Bill Irwin uses, they would be truisms—hackneyed and sentimental, like wide-eyed admiration for a Central Park roller skater, or like the bromides that the American musical has always offered as a cure for social ills. The movie musical (which is where show business and technology converge) has always posited *dance* as a panacea for social inequality, from Shirley Temple dancing with Bojangles on down to "Dirty Dancing." (Where but on a Hollywood sound stage would you have found the society of the 1930s allowing a large black man anywhere near a little white girl?) In the tradition of the movie-musical, "Largely New York" offers a fictional resolution for the problems that beset the real world. What makes the show, finally, so uplifting is the fact that it does so in a language we have not heard until now.

—Mimi Kramer

•

Soviet Deputy Defence Minister Army Gen Mikhail Sorokin, has revealed further details of the arms reductions announced by President Gorbachev at the United Nations in December 1988.

Of the 10 000 tanks to be withdrawn from service, said Gen Sorokin, 5000 will be destroyed, while the remaining 5000 "will be turned over to civilian use."

—*Jane's Defence Weekly.*

Just the thing for a spin around the collective.

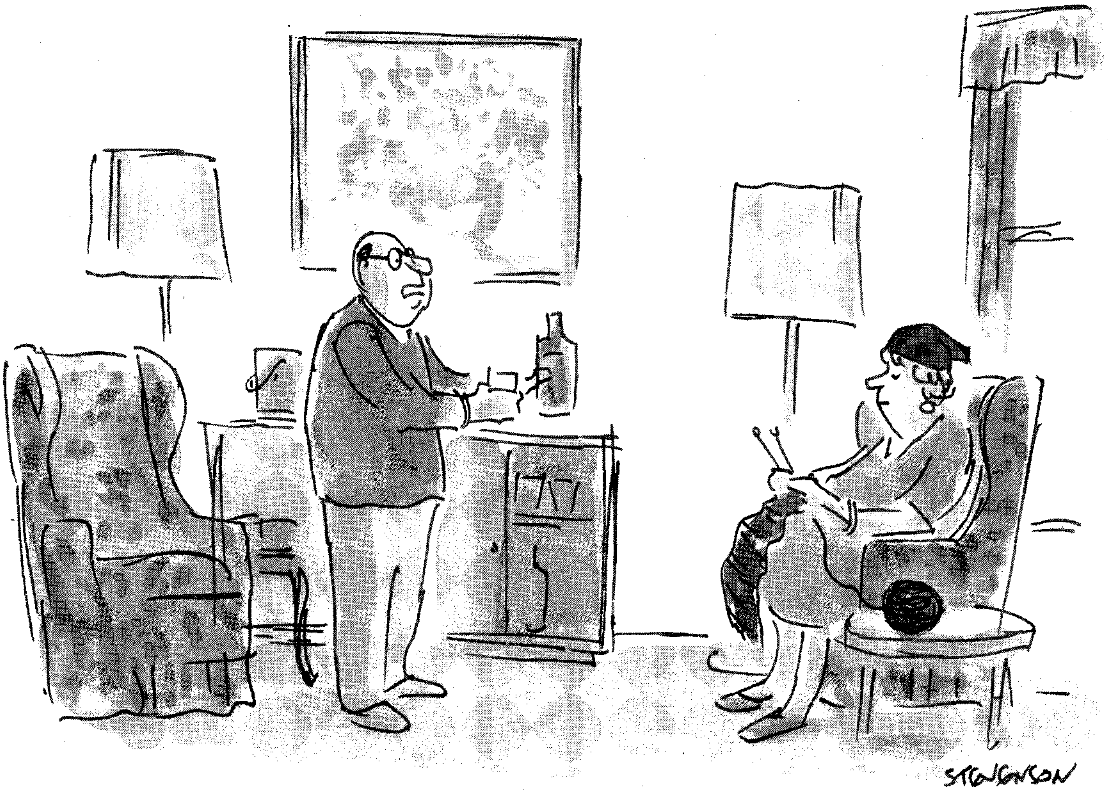
THE SPORTING SCENE

A BRITISH VICTORY IN BRITISH WEATHER

THE No. 1 priority on Bobby Jones's schedule when, in 1930, at twenty-eight, he retired from competitive golf, following his Grand Slam of the British Amateur, the British Open, the United States Open, and the United States Amateur championships, in that order, was to find a suitable site for the "dream course" he had been thinking about for years. In the autumn of 1930, friends of his in Augusta, Georgia, suggested that he drive over from Atlanta, his home town, and look at a property, Fruitlands Nurseries, that was for sale. This three-hundred-and-sixty-five-acre tract, the site of an old indigo plantation, had been purchased in 1857 by a Belgian baron, Louis Mathieu Édouard Berckmans. The baron, who was an ardent horticulturist, and his son Prosper, a professional agronomist and horticulturist, had turned it into one of the South's premier commercial nurseries. When Jones came to Augusta that autumn to inspect Fruitlands Nurseries, he was driven down the stately entranceway, Magnolia Lane, to the pre-Civil War manor house. He then walked to the rear of the house and saw before him a vast amphitheatre with stands of tall pines, bright plantings of flowers and bushes, and wide stretches of grassland that tumbled down a long hillside toward a stream, Rae's Creek. He knew at once that this was just the piece of land he had been hoping to find.

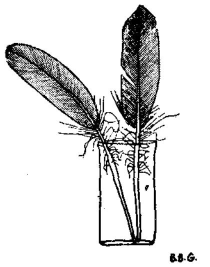
Robert Tyre Jones, Jr., was a man with an exceptionally clear and far-ranging mind. After he earned his degree in mechanical engineering at Georgia Tech in three years, he received a second B.S. degree from Harvard, where he had spent two years studying English literature for the most part and had also taken courses in French and German and in Roman, European, and English history. The son of a talented lawyer, he subsequently entered Emory University Law School, in Atlanta. After leaving law school, during his second year, he passed the Georgia State bar exam and became a lawyer. Jones also had the gift of common sense. While he had plenty of ideas about the shot values inherent in outstandingly good golf holes, once Fruitlands Nurseries had been bought by the newly founded Augusta National Golf Club and he had been elected the club's president, Jones's first step was to engage an experienced professional golf-course architect. His choice was Dr. Alister MacKenzie, a Yorkshireman of Scottish ancestry, whose work in the United States included Cypress Point, on the Monterey Peninsula, in California. In 1929, when the United States Amateur was held at the Pebble Beach Golf Links, also on the Monterey Peninsula, Jones had seized the opportunity to play Cypress Point, which had recently opened. He had been deeply impressed.

Jones had another reason for choosing MacKenzie. The kind of course he had in mind was one that had the basic characteristics of the Scottish courses he had come to love: the natural contours of the land would dictate the strategy of the holes; the fairways would be broad and swift; there would be few fairway or greenside bunkers; the greens would be large, undulating, and fast. MacKenzie, for his part, was delighted at the opportunity to design a course with Jones. The two men began work on Augusta National early in 1931. The first hole they found in their walks over the property was the present thirteenth, the celebrated 465-yard par 5. Shaped like a boomerang that bends to the left, the thirteenth has an elevated tee that rises on the far side of Rae's Creek. Its fairway is menaced along the left by pines and by an arm of Rae's Creek which twists abruptly across the fairway just in front of the green, then twists again and follows along the right side of the green. Rae's



"Isn't there some other way to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution?"

Creek and the smaller streams meandering through the lower reaches of the land presented difficult drainage problems. Another considerable challenge was to develop fairways and greens that would play like keen, racy Scottish fairways and greens. To begin with, sand and humus had to be mixed liberally with the clay soil of Georgia in order to give it the porosity and resilience of the linksland courses—and, for that matter, the inland courses—of Scotland, whose fine-bladed bent and fescue grasses were a far cry from the Bermuda grass native to our Southern states. (From the beginning, it was understood that Augusta National would be a winter course. It would be closed late in May, with the onset of hot weather, and reopened in mid-October after its fairways had been newly overseeded with an annual ryegrass.) The eighteen holes were formally opened for play in January, 1933, but work on improving the condition of the course and refining the playing qualities of the individual holes has never really stopped.



Later in 1933, the inner circle at Augusta National decided that, beginning in the spring of 1934, the club would play host to an annual invitational tournament in which the field would include past and present U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur champions, British Open and British Amateur champions, winners of the Professional Golfers of America Championship, and present members of the American Walker Cup and Ryder Cup teams. The club's first tournament, in 1934, was a highly successful event. Grantland Rice, then the country's most influential sportswriter, began referring to it that year as the Masters, but Jones, who thought this might seem pretentious, insisted that its proper name was the Augusta National Invitational Tournament. He did not agree to call it the Masters until 1938, when he realized that he was the only person who didn't.

TWO prominent members of the world of golf were not on hand for the inaugural Masters. One was the colorful professional golfer Gene Sarazen. He had earlier arranged to make a round-the-world tour with Joe Kirkwood, the Australian trick-shot artist. The other was MacKenzie, who had died the previous January. He was constantly in the thoughts of the people who gathered at Augusta National that spring. Despite the numerous, and sometimes spectacular, alterations that have been made down through the decades to strengthen individual holes—Perry Maxwell, Robert Trent Jones, George Cobb, Joseph Finger, George and Tom Fazio, and Jack Nicklaus are golf-course architects who have recommended and executed the major changes over the last fifty-five years, and Sarazen, Horton Smith, Byron Nelson, and Ben Hogan are some of the golfers who have suggested revisions or punctuation—Augusta National remains essentially the course that Jones and MacKenzie laid out. The key men at the club have been exceedingly conscientious in their efforts to maintain the course in the condition that Jones and MacKenzie had in mind. Today, the ball bounces and runs nicely on fairways sown with Tifton 328, a refined strain of Bermuda grass, which replaced the old Bermuda-grass fairways in 1972. As for the grass on the greens, it was changed from Tifton 328 to Pencross bent in 1981. Before and during the 1987 and 1988 Masters tournaments, the weather was particularly coöperative, and the greens had the firmness and speed that Augusta National has always been after.

Interestingly, the year the first Masters was held, what we know today as the first nine holes were the second nine holes, and vice versa. The opening holes of the original second nine are on relatively high land, and, since it takes less time for them to absorb the morning frost, it seemed unwise to start play on what is now the tenth hole, a long par 4 that slides downhill some four hundred yards and leads the golfer into the lower reaches of the course. After the inaugural Masters, it was decided to reverse the two nines, and this arrangement became permanent. The change proved to be an inspired one. On every course, most tournaments are won or lost on the second nine, and probably no other second nine in the world puts as much pressure as Augusta National's does on a golfer who is in a contending position. On all but one hole from the eleventh through the sixteenth, a water hazard poses a serious threat on the shot to the green. The first three of those holes conjoin at Amen Corner, at the southern extremity of the property. On the eleventh, a 455-yard par 4, a pond borders the left side of a cape-type green, which sits about five or six feet above it; on the twelfth, a 155-yard par 3, Rae's Creek, which is about thirty feet wide, separates the fairway from a narrow, diagonal green; and on the thirteenth, as was noted earlier, an arm of Rae's Creek suddenly angles across the fairway in front of the green and then snakes along the right side of the green. Far more often than not, a misplayed shot at Amen Corner results in the loss of two strokes, and such errors have changed the outcome of countless Masters championships. There is no water to worry about on the fourteenth, a 405-yard par 4—only the slickest and least readable green on the course. Then it is back to trial by water. Following the tee shot on the fifteenth, a straightaway 500-yard par 5, the fairway falls down a long hillside. A small oval pond lies between the end of the fairway and the green, which slides downward from back to front and from right to left. Jones was primarily responsible for the thirteenth and the fifteenth. He thought that there was no duller hole in golf than a par 5 on which a player had to hit three shots to reach the green. He was the father of the short par 5, the par 4½, on which an aggressive golfer could pick up a stroke on par, and sometimes two, by putting together a pair of brilliant shots. (It was, of course, Sarazen's double-eagle 2 on the fifteenth on the last round of the 1935 Masters—he went on to win it in a playoff—that first made golfers around the globe aware of the new tournament.) On the sixteenth, a 170-yard par 3, a fairway of water separates the tee from a two-level green. There is no water on the seventeenth or eighteenth, a pair of medium-length par 4s. On both these holes, though, it takes a controlled drive and a shrewd approach shot to set up a makable birdie putt.

The second nine at Augusta National has provoked so many frenetic stretch drives and melodramatic victories that it has replaced the second nine of the Old Course at St. Andrews as the best-known nine holes in the world. What memories it evokes! In

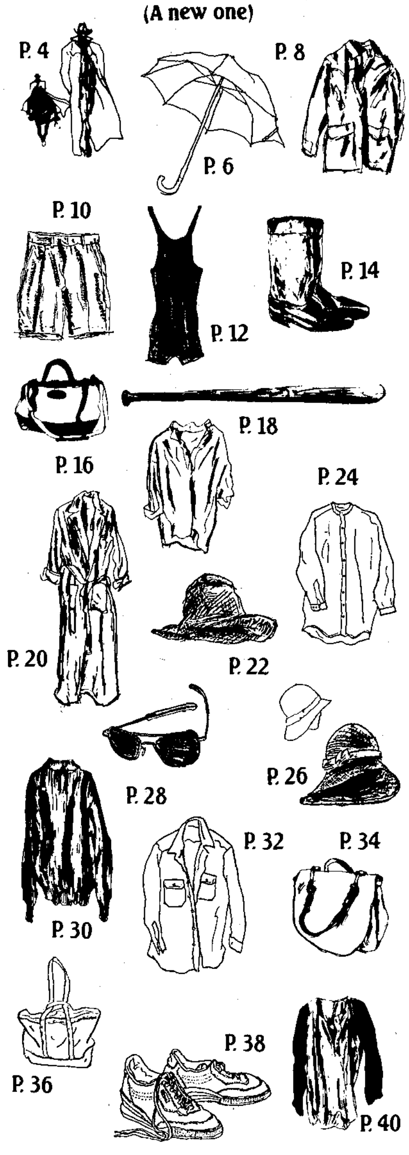
1959, for example, Arnold Palmer lost command of the Masters by taking a triple-bogey 6 on the twelfth on the last round, and in the ensuing whirligig Art Wall emerged as the winner when he birdied five of the last six holes. (No golfer since, by the way, has duplicated this finish in winning a major tournament.) In 1978, Gary Player came dashing down the last nine in thirty strokes—three pars and six birdies—to carry the day. And, of course, there was the unbelievable closing rush in 1986 by Nicklaus, then forty-six years old. Four strokes behind the leader, with holes running out, Nicklaus eagled the fifteenth by holing from twelve feet, barely missed a hole-in-one on the sixteenth but made a three-footer for a birdie, birdied the seventeenth from eleven feet, and finished with a solid par for a 65 (35-30) and a one-stroke margin of victory.

FROM the back tees, the two nines at Augusta National are about the same length; the first nine measures 3,465 yards, the second 3,440 yards. Each is made up of five par 4s, two par 3s, and two par 5s, so par on each side is 36. The first nine, however, has an entirely different flavor from the second. For starters, there isn't a single water hazard on it, and one doesn't feel the constant threat of calamity. There are other, less obvious disparities. When all is said and done, however, the chief reason the first nine has a distinct personality of its own is simply that it is the first nine. As such, it doesn't have an impending sense of finality about it. The golfer who drops a careless shot or two to par still has a chance to recoup them before his round is finished. Like every great course, Augusta National takes a lot of learning. Intelligent golfers soon discover that many of the holes on the opening nine play harder than they first appear to, and they make it a point to bear down all the way.

On the opening hole, a more or less straightaway 400-yard par 4, the key shot is the drive. The ideal line is just to the left of a large, deep bunker, some two hundred and fifty yards out, that is cut into the right-hand edge of a fairway that has climbed a long, steep hillside. No question about it, it is an incalculable advantage at Augusta National to be able to fly the ball a long distance off the tee. The golfer's main consideration on his approach shot on the first is not to traffic with the sizable bunker that patrols the front left side of the green. During the Masters, the pin is usually placed behind that bunker on two of the four rounds. A high number of four- and five-foot putts are missed on this green. The fact that it is the first green may partly account for that, but the surface of the green is filled with tiny breaks that are hard to read.

On the second hole, a 555-yard par 5, the fairway bends to the left about two hundred and seventy-five yards from the tee and rolls down the side of a long hill to a green protected by two good-sized bunkers, one at the front and the other along the right-hand edge. On days when the air is still or the wind is with the golfers, a good many of them can carry their second shot onto the green in this era of the very lively golf ball. Many old-timers think that the second was a better hole in the days when the opening to the green was to the left of a smaller front bunker, because a golfer like Jimmy Demaret could then play an artistic fade with his brassie and run the ball onto the green from left to right. A surprising number of spectators at the Masters like to get out onto the course fairly early in the morning, find a spot where they can camp at the edge of a green on which there is plenty of action, and stay there until the last twosome has gone through. There is always a huge gallery crowded around the second green, eager to applaud a glittering second shot or to roar whenever a putt for an eagle or a birdie finds the cup. The sixth, seventh, and ninth greens also attract large, eruptive galleries.

The third hole, a 360-yard par 4, is a lovely drive-and-pitch hole. Most of the players use a fairway wood off the tee, but some prefer to go with a 1-iron or a 2-iron. It all depends on the area of the fairway from which the golfer likes to play his approach, which can vary from a 6-iron to a sand wedge. The green is relatively small, and presents an exacting target. For one thing, it sits just beyond a dangerously abrupt downslope. The left side of the green, which is thirty to forty-five feet deep, is bunkered on the left, and there are grassy mounds behind it. The right side must extend some thirty feet deeper than the left. As good a way as any to get an idea of the odd shape of this green is to think of Whistler's portrait of his mother, with her long,



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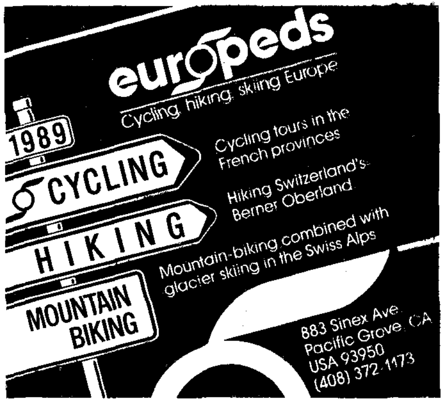

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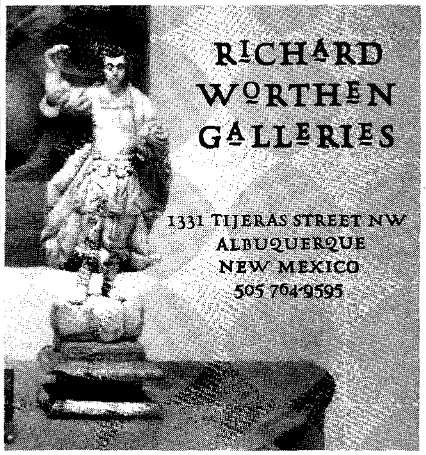

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straight back and her knees projecting to the left. The pin is usually positioned center left or back right, and an exquisite sense of distance is needed. The wind can be deceptive on this hole. The flag may be hanging limp, but experienced players know that wind can be muffled by the cordon of spectators around the fourth tee, situated close behind the third green. A few players hit their driver off the tee on the third, so that before playing their second shot they will have the advantage of studying how the conditions that day affected the flight of their playing partner's pitch. The third hole still has MacKenzie written all over it.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth holes are three of the best at Augusta National. The fourth, a 205-yard par 3, has been referred to over the years as Jones and MacKenzie's variation on the famous 172-yard eleventh at St. Andrews, which a good many students of the game consider the best short hole in golf. The eleventh green slants downhill at such a severe angle that when the wind is blowing from behind the green it is sometimes impossible to keep the ball from rolling off it. Along with this, Strath Bunker noses from the fairway deep into the front of the green on the right, and in trying to avoid Strath many golfers wind up in Hill Bunker, a deep pit at the front left edge of the green. The main area of the Augusta National's fourth green is a wide and relatively shallow rectangle that slopes down from back to front. The key bunker, a sizable one, sits just in front of the green and about five or six feet below it. On the left, a narrow arm of the green extends another twenty-five feet down the slope. The key bunker is nestled to its right, and a long, shallow bunker trails along its left side. This is a rather exposed hole, with limited space behind the green. Judging the distance to the pin correctly is far and away the first requisite. On days when the wind is gusting, some veteran players feel that if they don't hit the green there are a number of worse places to end up in than the front bunker.

A good many fans like to take in the action on the fourth green from the fourth tee. This gives them a chance to also catch some of the action on the third hole. As a result, the play on the fifth, a 435-yard par 4, is watched by a comparatively thin band of spectators. Since the fifth occupies the high land at the extreme western corner of the course, quite a few Masters regulars walk out and watch the action there on only one of the four rounds, and some pass it by entirely. It happens to be a marvellous hole, and a unique one. The golfer first faces a semi-blind tee shot. He knows that he must hit the ball to the right of a pair of jagged bunkers on the left side of the upthrust fairway, and that he will be better off if it veers to the right. Even after a well-placed tee shot, he still faces a rigorous second. The lower part of a fancifully molded two-level green is a continuation of the fairway, and the upper level drops off sharply at the back. The pin is always placed on the upper level. It is more than worth the hike to watch the best golfers in the world play the second shot on the fifth.

WHEN a golfer makes his first visit to Augusta National, one of the holes that impress him most is the sixth, a 180-yard par 3. The tee, which is slightly below the level of the fifth fairway, must be sixty feet higher than the green. Although the appeal of a one-shot hole played from an elevated tee to a green well below it must have been recognized back in the early days of the gutta-percha golf ball, one seldom encounters it on such a grand scale as the sixth provides. Add to this the tall pines alongside the tee and the banks of azaleas that line the curving path down to the fairway, and one can understand the impact that the sixth makes at first meeting. The green, protected by a single bunker at the front left corner, is large and complex. Its surface slopes down from back to front and also from right to left. There is a good-sized knob about twenty-five feet from the back right corner of the green, and this sets up the toughest pin position.

The seventh was far and away the least admired hole on the original course. It was a straightaway par 4 about three hundred and twenty yards long, with its green situated in a hollow. Perhaps that was meant to give the hole a certain Scottish feeling. Well aware of its lack of charm and distinction, Jones made it known that the club was open to suggestions for improving it. Horton Smith, who had won two of the first three Masters tournaments, proposed the change that was accepted. This called for a new green that would have something of the aspect of the renowned Postage Stamp hole at Troon, the 126-yard par-3 eighth, on which the small green juts out from a knoll on the left and is guarded by deep bunkers, particularly the ones in front and on the right. On the revised seventh, the thin green occupies land that rises behind the original green. Some fifteen feet higher than the fairway, it is protected in front by three sizable bunkers and at the back by two smaller ones. Now three hundred and sixty yards long, the seventh is a worrisome hole. Everything depends on the golfer's judging precisely the length of his approach shot. Every player knows all the pertinent esoterica: Stay away from the right side of the fairway on your tee shot—the branches of several pines hang out over that side of the fairway and complicate your second shot. Never play for the left quarter of the green—it tips acutely left and won't hold your shot. On certain days, consider playing a long iron off the tee—if you then hit your approach shot, a 7- or 8-iron, with proper timing it will have the high parabola that will enable the ball to drop onto the green as softly as a butterfly. Above all, always hit one club longer than you think you need.

The eighth, a 535-yard par 5 that runs parallel to the second, climbs the stiffest hill on the course. Originally, the hole was graced by one of MacKenzie's specialties—a punch-bowl green with a tiny entrance. Steep, shaggy mounds eight to seventeen feet high rose abruptly along the left and right sides of a long, narrow putting surface that curved to the left. The prudent golfer who laid up short of the green in two usually fared better than the gambler who attempted to get home in two. According to Ronald E. Whitten, a lawyer from Topeka, who has become an authority on the evolution of the top American golf courses, Clifford Roberts, the longtime chairman of the Masters, had the punch-bowl green removed in 1955 in the interests of improved gallery circulation. It was replaced by a rather ordinary green that made the hole shorter, easier, and duller. In the summer of 1979, the gallery problems having long since been solved, Byron Nelson and Joseph Finger, the golf-course architect Nelson works with, were asked to re-create the original green in its original location. With his reliable memory and the help of old photographs, Nelson did a fine job of recapturing the antique mounding and the hooked surface of the old eighth green, and the hole has once again become a provocative test.

The ninth, a 435-yard par 4, runs roughly parallel to the first hole. The fairway bends from right to left and coasts down a long incline for about three hundred yards. The plateau-type green, which sits considerably above it, opens at the right, and there are two angular bunkers close by on the left. The ninth is an enigma. It looks as if it should be a gem of a hole, but there is something amiss. A number of old hands believe that the fault lies with the surface of the green, which slopes, imperceptibly at times, from back to front, and can be disconcertingly fast. When the pin is positioned fairly near the entrance, it is not at all uncommon to see the backspin on a good-looking pitch exceed expectations. The ball hops back two or three feet and frequently, after seeming to have settled down, slides back slowly again, slips off the green, and, often, trickles a few yards down the slope below the green.

Johnny Miller set the record low score of 30 for the first nine, in 1975. He birdied the second hole and the next five. Greg Norman tied this mark in 1988. The record low score for the second nine is also 30. Demaret set it, back in 1940, and it has since been equalled by Hogan, Player, Nicklaus, Gene Littler, Miller Barber, Maurice Bembridge, and Nick Price.

It has been the policy of Augusta National not to announce the daily attendance at the Masters, but the consensus is that well upward of forty thousand spectators pour onto the course each day. Their common goal is to find a good spot from which to watch some of the action on two or more of the critical holes on the second nine, but each day a high percentage of them get to take in quite a bit of the play on the first nine. After consulting their pairing sheet, they select a popular golfer or an attractive twosome with a fairly early starting time, and follow their play on the first two holes. What they do from that point on is unpredictable, because there are so many options, including those suggested by giant leader boards on which the rounds of the pacemakers are posted

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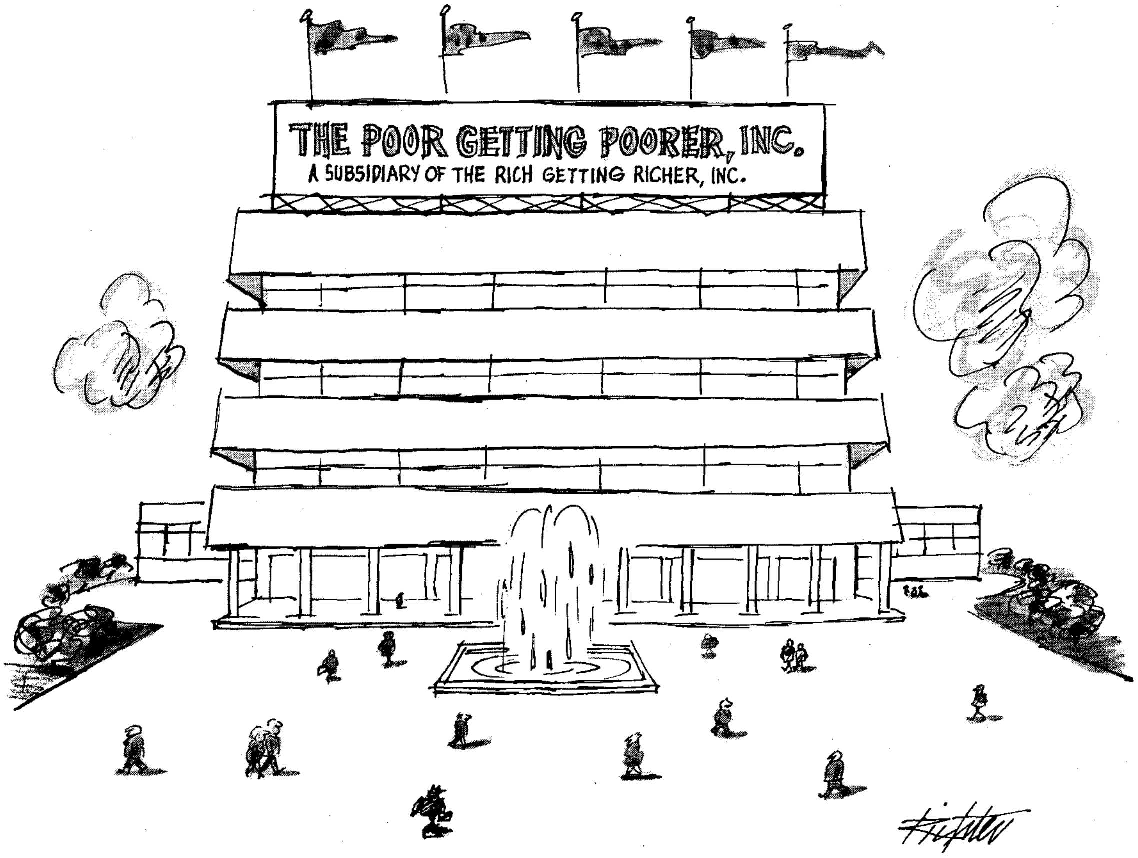
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hole by hole. One fairly reliable generalization can be made: once the spectators are out on the course, few of them choose to walk the complete loop of the first nine holes back to the clubhouse. The uphill climb on the eighth is just too much of a slog. Besides, the refreshment stands and the rest rooms out on the course are first-class, and it is never too early to think of finding that choice vantage point on the second nine.

What tends to get lost in the long day's shuffle is the high calibre of the holes on the first nine. Each spring, Augusta National releases a brief analysis of how the low twenty-four finishers and ties scored in terms of par on each of the eighteen holes in the previous year's Masters. Almost invariably, one learns that the holes on the first nine gave the field as much difficulty as those on the second, or more. In the 1986 Masters, for instance, the first hole played the hardest of any, with the third and the fourth close behind. In 1987, the fourth caused the most trouble, and the scoring on the sixth, the first, the third, and the seventh ran high, too. Last year, the fourth again proved to be the toughest, and the sixth and the first also yielded a low ratio of birdies to bogeys. The longer one studies Augusta National, the more impressed one is by the course's balance. Both nines call for very astute shotmaking, but, as is only appropriate, it is frequently the second nine, with its grim succession of water holes, testing a golfer's nerve as much as his talent, that decides the winning and the losing of the tournament.

THE drama that the 1989 Masters provided furnished further evidence that the tournament was born under a lucky star. On the eve of the opening round, on Thursday, sunlight flooded the wide green stretches of the course, and the air was as mild as it usually is in Georgia in April. It turned cold overnight, however. The temperature on Thursday was in the middle fifties, and a biting wind, which diminished slightly by noon, blew out of the northeast. On the second day, the wind was fiercer and colder, and the course has rarely been more difficult to play. In midafternoon of the third day, a lightning storm interrupted play for almost two hours, and the day's round was subsequently called because of darkness, with seven twosomes still on the course. At nine o'clock on Sunday morning, play was resumed, and the fourteen golfers finished their third round. The fourth round got under way later in the morning, the first twosome teeing off at eleven-thirty, the last at ten minutes to three. The fourth round should unquestionably have started considerably earlier—with the last twosome teeing off around one-thirty—to allow for the possibility of more rain and slower play, and also to insure more daylight time in the event that a sudden-death playoff was necessary, as proved to be the case. (One can only speculate on how much the pressure of television influenced this decision.) Scott Hoch, a thirty-three-year-old North Carolinian who now lives in Orlando, and Nick Faldo, a thirty-one-year-old Englishman, finished the four rounds with totals of 283, five strokes under par, and then went out in the misty gloaming to decide the issue. On the first extra hole, the 485-yard par-4 tenth, Hoch missed a two-foot putt for a par that would have won him the tournament. On the 455-yard eleventh, that hazardous par 4, Faldo gained the day by hitting a strong 3-iron approach to the center of the green and then ramming home a twenty-five-foot putt for a dramatic birdie 3. Had it been necessary to play more holes, the playoff would have had to be continued the next morning. In a number of previous Masters tournaments, it has been necessary to suspend play for a full day because the course was unplayable. While the 1989 Masters required only four days of play, I would think that, all in all, the weather this year was close to being the worst the tournament has ever had to suffer through. At the same time, the Masters certainly upheld its reputation for providing stirring finishes. In Faldo, the 1987 British Open champion, it also gained an extremely worthy winner.

This year's tournament got off to a tremendous start. On the raw opening day—the wind gusted to twenty miles an hour before subsiding somewhat—

the course played at least two strokes harder than its par of 72. The fairways were in excellent shape, and the greens required shrewd reading and touch. In these testing conditions, a most unlikely player, the forty-nine-year-old Lee Trevino, jumped out in front with a remarkable 67. Trevino, who plays his shots from left to right and in a low trajectory, has made it amply clear over the years that he doesn't consider Augusta National a great course. He believes that it favors the golfer who hits the ball from right to left, hits it high, and carries it long distances. For all his criticism, Trevino has not done poorly in the Masters. In seventeen previous appearances in the tournament, he made the thirty-six-hole cut all but three times, and two of those years were 1987 and 1988. During the last two seasons, Trevino has played comparatively little competitive golf, but he is looking forward eagerly to increasing his activity in 1990. He will turn fifty this December and will then become eligible for the Senior P.G.A. Tour, with its far from meagre purses.

The winner of six major championships—the 1968 and 1971 U.S. Opens, the 1971 and 1972 British Opens, and the 1974 and 1984 P.G.A. Championships—Trevino has never hit the ball better than he did this April in the opening round of the Masters. He was one of the early starters. Driving the ball low under the wind and playing a succession of superb irons, he was out in 32, four under par, with four birdies and five pars. His birdies came on the long second, where he holed a ten-foot putt; the third, where he holed a twenty-footer; the fifth, where he holed from five feet after a stupendous 4-iron approach shot; and the ninth, where he belted his drive to the bottom of the hill, stopped his pitch with his sand wedge twenty feet from the pin, and made the putt. Continuing to hit the ball sweetly on the first seven holes of the second nine, he was back in 35 with eight pars and a birdie on the par-3 sixteenth, where he stopped his 5-iron three feet from the flag. In his interview with the press, Trevino admitted to a slight breakdown in his concentration on the last two holes. In each instance, he missed the green with his approach shot but saved his par by getting down in a chip and a putt. On this round, the only other greens he missed hitting in the regulation shot were the first and the fourth. "This means a tremendous amount to me," Trevino said. "I may come back with three 80s, but it won't bother me." He added a vintage Trevinoism: "This lets them know there is still a spark in the fireplace. I just have to know where to throw the wood."

Only one other player, Faldo, broke 70 on the first round. He set up his 68 by driving the ball exceptionally well. His only bogey came when he missed a two-foot putt on the eleventh green. He made sizable birdie putts on three greens and, after reaching the par-5 thirteenth with a drive and 1-iron, rolled in a twelve-footer for an eagle. Under the harsh playing conditions, the general quality of the golf that day was superlative. No fewer than twenty players broke or equalled par. A stroke over par, at 73, was another interesting forty-nine-year-old, Jack Nicklaus. On the first hole, driving dead into the wind, he hit a most uncharacteristic opening tee shot, a high pop-up that carried all of a hundred and fifty yards. He then hit the green with a screaming 1-iron. He went on to play a rather scattery 39 on the first nine, but Nicklaus is still an incredible athlete. He played the second nine in eight 4s and a 2—on the sixteenth—to come home in 34. Nicklaus did not figure in the winning and losing of this Masters, but he followed his 73 with rounds of 74, 73, and 71. His swing was rhythmic and youthful, and as long as his back isn't bothering him it will probably continue to be for some years to come.

ON Friday, the day of the second round, the cold wind out of the northeast blew harder, spurting at times to thirty miles an hour. At Augusta National, winds from all quarters tend to swirl around the course, and this one did, too. However, it seemed to blow hardest on the thirteenth, the dogleg par 5, which runs north and then west, and on the par-5 fifteenth and the par-3 sixteenth, which run northwest. Only five players broke par on this round. Ken Green had a splendid 69, hitting every green except the twelfth in the regulation stroke. He one-putted three times for birdies to make the turn in 33, and, coming back, he made up for three-putting the eleventh, for his only bogey of the round, by running in a ten-footer for a birdie on the fourteenth. The four other rounds below par were

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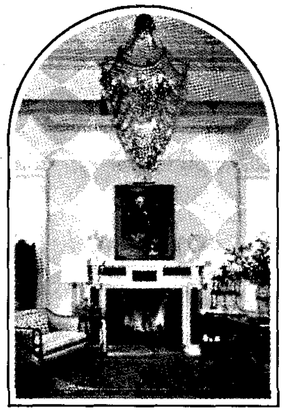

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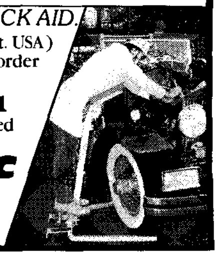

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This was a day that tried nearly everyone's patience—Severiano (Seve) Ballesteros's, for instance. He stood three under par for the round as he lay three on the front fringe of the fifteenth green some thirty feet from the pin. After putting the ball about two and a half feet to the left of the cup, he needed three putts to get down. That was a 7. He dropped another stroke to par on the seventeenth, and finished with a 72 and a two-round total of 143. Trevino and Faldo, who were paired in the last twosome, played well in the rough weather. After going out in 38, two over par, Trevino showed his stuff by pulling himself together and playing the last eight holes in one under par for a 74, and a thirty-six-hole total of 141. Faldo went out in 34 with birdies on the two par 3s, holing from sixteen feet on the fourth and from six feet on the sixth. For most of the day, he was leading the tournament, but he came back to the field when he bogeyed the eleventh, sixteenth, and seventeenth for a 39 on the back nine, a round of 73, and a two-round total of 141, which tied him for the lead with Trevino at the halfway mark, two strokes ahead of Ballesteros, Green, Reid, Hoch, and Ben Crenshaw. The thirty-six-hole cut came at 151, a rather high mark. Fifty-two golfers made it by finishing their first two rounds within ten strokes of the two leaders' totals.

Many of the players in contention had revealing comments on how the course had played on the second round. Tom Kite, 72-72 (144): "It's really difficult out there now. The greens are really, really fast. The wind is rocking you. The only saving grace is that the greens are still holding because of the rain." Crenshaw, the 1984 Masters winner, 71-72 (143): "My brains are about gone. I'm happy to be in the shape I'm in and not blown away by the wind. A 72 was like a 67 or a 68 on a calm day." Ballesteros, 71-72 (143): "It's close to being the toughest I ever played in here. I hope the wind keeps blowing. I have a better chance." Faldo, 68-73 (141): "You just have to be the most patient you can be the whole year when you're playing Augusta."

On Saturday, the day of the third round, the wind had shifted and was blowing mildly out of the west. Everyone at Augusta National was hoping that a pleasant Georgia spring day was in the offing. A little after eleven o'clock, however, a light rain began to fall, and though it stopped within the hour it left behind a gray sky and the threat of more rain. Neither Trevino nor Faldo—they were paired in the last twosome for the second straight day—started his round auspiciously. Trevino bogeyed the third hole when it took him three putts to get down from ten feet. He missed a birdie putt of twelve feet on the fourth and took two more putts for a bogey. He three-putted the sixth. On the seventh, his pitch to the elevated green hit the flagstick, but he missed both his ten-foot putt for a birdie and his two-footer coming back. He picked up his fifth bogey of the round on the ninth, and was out in 41. Faldo didn't fare much better. His opening drive plugged itself in the deep bunker on the right side of the fairway. He blasted out onto the fairway, missed the green with his approach shot, and took a double-bogey 6. There is a good deal of tenacity in Faldo, who is six feet three and built like a tight end. After driving into the woods on the long second, he had to hack the ball onto the fairway by swinging a 6-iron backward at it with his right hand as he stood with his back to the fairway. He managed to knock the ball some sixty yards down the hill. He was on the green in three with a long iron and then sank a hundred-foot birdie putt that travelled across the green from the back right corner to the front left corner. This is the longest putt that has ever been made in the Masters. It replaces the seventy-five-footer, from the back of the thirteenth green to the front, that Cary Middlecoff, the Masters winner in 1955, rolled in en route to a 65 on his second round that year. A birdie on the fifth got Faldo back to even par for this round, but he fell off the pace with a bogey 5 on the seventh.

Crenshaw, who was paired with Ballesteros in the third-from-last twosome, was the man who took over the lead. Now thirty-seven, Crenshaw is one of the most respected people in golf. This year, his play on the P.G.A. Tour has been lacklustre. His shotmaking from tee to green has been rather loose, and even his putting, which is his forte, has been nothing special. In his practice rounds at Augusta, he worked hard on slowing down the tempo of his swing and finding his timing, and on the first two rounds he played a succession of first-rate shots on which he hit well through the ball and finished with his hands high. He got moving on the third round by sinking a putt of twelve feet to birdie the second. On the 205-yard fourth, his 3-iron ended up about forty feet to the left of the flag, and he rolled in the slippery birdie putt. The pin on the fifth was positioned this day at the very beginning of the upper level of the green, just beyond the rising wall of the left hollow. Crenshaw misjudged the distance of his approach shot, and the ball came down and drew up on the front left fringe of the green some forty-five feet from the flag. He read the speed and break of the green perfectly, and made a fantastic putt. The ball rolled across the left hollow, climbed the upslope well to the left of the pin, broke slowly to the right as it reached the upper level, and came to rest a foot and a half short of the cup. This putt must have reinforced Crenshaw's confidence. After parring the sixth, he stopped his pitch to the seventh eighteen feet to the left of the pin and made that putt for another birdie. Four under par for the tournament, he was now in the lead.

Some ten minutes later, lightning flashed in the storm clouds looming to the east. Shortly afterward, at 3:31 P.M., play was suspended. It rained fairly hard for a while and then eased up a little. At five-eleven, play was resumed. The wind had shifted and was now coming out of the east. The air was colder, and the greens and fairways were appreciably slower. Faldo, in particular, was affected by the soaked greens. He three-putted the ninth to turn in 38, and went on to take three putts on both the tenth and the eleventh. Crenshaw, on the other hand, continued to purr smoothly along. Following the resumption of play, he putted out for his par on the eighth. Continuing to hit his shots well within himself, he parred the ninth to turn in 33, and added four methodical pars before play was called because of darkness, at six-forty-five. After they returned to the course following the rain delay, the players just crawled along, taking their own sweet time to adjust to the changed playing conditions. It took them almost an hour to play three holes, and in the last forty minutes they managed to play two more. Crenshaw walked in after hitting his drive down the fourteenth fairway and marking the ball with a coin and a tee. Four strokes under par for the tournament, he held a four-stroke lead on the nearest contenders, Faldo, Reid, and Hoch, and a five-stroke lead on Greg Norman, who had got back into the battle with a 68. "A four- or five-shot lead is not enough here," Crenshaw said before leaving the club that night. "I want to go out tomorrow and build a bigger lead than I've got, because I know what has happened here."

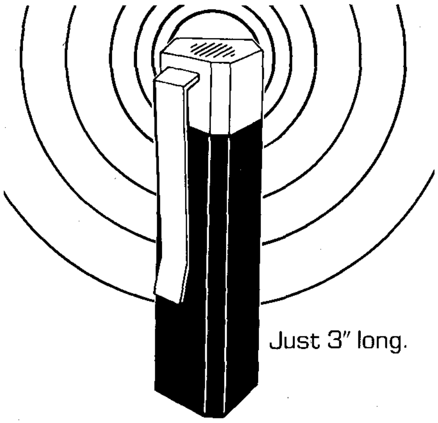
The rain grew heavier and continued to pelt down until nine-thirty.

AT nine o'clock sharp on Sunday morning, the fourteen players who had not finished their third rounds started to do so. With the greens soft and holding from all the rain, conditions were ideal for scoring. Crenshaw, after missing birdie putts of twelve and a half and seven and a half feet on the fourteenth and fifteenth, finished with two pars and a bogey 5 on the eighteenth, where he hit a poor drive, for a round of 70, and a three-round total of 213. A high number of the late finishers took far better advantage than Crenshaw did of the opportunity that the course offered them. Scott Hoch and Mike Reid moved to within a shot of the lead, at 214, by playing the last five holes in two under par. Both had 71s. Kite stood at 216, even par for the tournament and three off the pace, after playing two birdies and three pars on the last five holes for a 72. Ballesteros was also at 216, after a dazzling rush—birdie, birdie, par, birdie, par—had transformed a bad round into a 73. Green, too, was at 216 after a 73, but he had gone one over par on the last four holes. O'Meara was a stroke further back, at 217, along with Norman, after playing the last four holes in one under par for a 72. Faldo stood at 218. He had lost two more strokes to par on the last six holes and was five strokes behind the leader. Curtis Strange, who had birdied the fifty-third hole, and Tom Watson, who had bogeyed the fifty-fourth, were six back, at 219, after rounds of 74. Trevino, it should be noted, had fallen away to an 81 on the third round and was now out of the running.

A golf tournament is never won or lost until the final shot is struck, but in retrospect I suppose it could be said that Crenshaw lost the 1989 Masters on Sunday morning when the leaders completed their third rounds.

IN the final round on Sunday, the first twosome teed off at eleven-thirty. Faldo and Larry Mize were off at 2:18 P.M., Norman and O'Meara at 2:26 P.M., Ballesteros and Green at 2:34 P.M., Reid and Kite at 2:42 P.M., and Crenshaw and Hoch at 2:50 P.M. The fourth round turned out to be a gallimaufry of spectacular charges and unseized opportunities. The first man to light up the sky was Ballesteros, the Spanish virtuoso. He was off the mark instantly. After a big drive on the first hole, he carried his approach over the front bunker, stopped it twelve feet beyond the flag, and made the birdie putt. On the long second, with the pin in the back right corner of the green, he had apparently tossed away a crack at a birdie when he popped a weak wedge pitch into the bunker on the right. He then concocted a delicate semi-explosion shot that landed some eight feet short of the pin and rolled straight into the cup for a second birdie. A routine par on the third. On the 205-yard fourth, he rapped in a twenty-footer that was slightly uphill for his birdie, and he added another birdie on the fifth by getting down another substantial putt. He was now four under par for the tournament, and out in front by himself, after this dash in which he birdied four of the first five holes. Three quiet pars followed. Then Ballesteros birdied the ninth by stopping a soft pitch five feet from the pin. He was out in 31.

On the 485-yard downhill tenth, perhaps the most beautiful inland par 4 in the world, Ballesteros made his first error since the second hole. He pulled his tee shot into the heavy rough on the left, had to play a conservative recovery, and ended by taking a bogey 5. That quickly, he was out of the lead. In the twosome directly behind Ballesteros and Green, Reid, the thin, bespectacled veteran whose chief distinction is that he is one of the straightest drivers among the nomads, was on fire. After birdies on the sixth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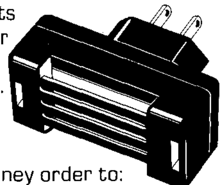

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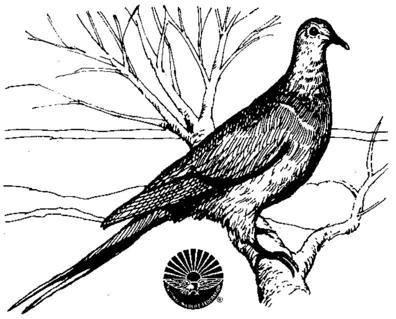

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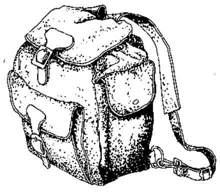

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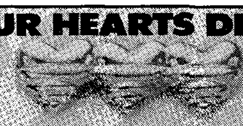

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and eighth, he birdied the ninth to make the turn in 33. He stood five under par for the tournament now, a stroke ahead of Ballesteros. At that point, it began to rain again, but fortunately there was no lightning, and play continued.

On the perilous short twelfth, Reid widened his lead over Ballesteros to two strokes with a birdie 2. Some twenty minutes later, following four straight pars, Ballesteros, one of the longest hitters in the game, was looking forward to snaring a birdie on the 500-yard par-5 fifteenth and igniting a stretch drive that would carry him to victory. He was over the pond and on the front fringe of the green in two, about thirty-five feet from the pin, which was set at the right center of the green. He rolled his third about four and a half feet to the left of the cup. In his absorption with his birdie putt, he neglected to take a look at the nearby sixteenth green, on which Norman, who had reeled off four birdies on the previous seven holes to get back into contention, was studying the line of a twenty-five-foot putt he had for still another birdie, one that would put him four under par for the tournament. Ballesteros carefully set himself over his putt. A fraction of a second before he struck the ball, a loud, excited salvo of shouts went up from the sixteenth green. Norman had holed his birdie putt! The outburst may have thrown Ballesteros off his stroke. His ball slid by the left edge of the cup. Clearly upset, he stared angrily at the gallery around the sixteenth green. He then tapped his ball in for his par. He had missed a crucial opportunity. Still four under par, he needed a birdie desperately. It would allow him not only to pass Norman but to catch Reid, who, as the leader board showed, had slipped back to five under par for the tournament by missing his par on the fourteenth.

The pin on the sixteenth green this day was set in the back left corner. Ballesteros hit a good-looking 6-iron, but he had misread the distance. The ball landed in the tall grass on the bank beyond the pond and tumbled back into the hazard. The best he could do on the hole was a 5, and that was it for Ballesteros.

ANOTHER look at the leader board disclosed that a great deal had been happening during the spectators' preoccupation with Ballesteros. Hoch, who had gone to the turn in 33 to move five under par for the tournament, was still five under playing the fourteenth. Crenshaw, who had earlier got to four under, had slipped back to three under. The leader board also showed that up ahead, playing the seventeenth, the forgotten man, Faldo, who had started the last round two over par and had moved to two under after playing the first nine in 32, was now four under par for the tournament, having birdied the fourteenth and the sixteenth. Reid was now on the fifteenth. The spectators standing in the rain alongside the green had heard two celebratory salvos, about eight minutes apart, go up from the vicinity of the seventeenth fairway and the seventeenth green, and they wondered if Faldo was still burning up the course.

Reid, five under par and tied for the lead with Hoch, laid up short of the pond on the fifteenth in two. He had about a forty-five-yard pitch over the pond and its upsloping far bank to the front edge of the green and another thirty-five feet to the pin. He either misread or mis-hit his short pitch. The ball landed about halfway up the far bank and rolled back into the pond. Reid ended up with a 7 on the hole and, as abruptly as that he was out of the race. Hoch and Crenshaw soon came into view at the top of the hill on the fifteenth. Crenshaw laid up short of the pond on his second. Hoch, after a big drive, went for the green. His shot carried the pond comfortably and finished in the bunker on the right about twenty feet from the pin. He played the touchy sand shot perfectly, stopping the ball four feet from the pin. He made the putt for his birdie 4, and now he was in the lead at six under par for the distance—a stroke ahead of Faldo, who had indeed birdied the seventeenth. Faldo had proceeded to par the eighteenth for a 65 (32-33) and a four-round total of 283, and was taken to the Bob Jones Cabin, where he could watch the finish of the telecast in relative privacy. Up the hill on the 405-yard eighteenth came Norman. He was five under par for the tournament now, having birdied the seventeenth after hitting his approach stiff to the pin. He needed a par 4 to tie Faldo. In the 1986 Masters, Norman had come to the seventy-second needing a 4 to tie Nicklaus. He had pushed his approach to the right of the green and then taken three more shots to get down. On this day—the pin was set on the left side of the lower terrace, directly behind the front bunker—Norman was well short of the green with his approach shot. He was short again with his chip, and then missed the twelve-footer he needed for his 4.

In the meantime, Hoch had got his par on the short sixteenth. Crenshaw had birdied it after firing a 5-iron seven feet from the flag, and had moved to four under par. On the 400-yard seventeenth, which is usually a drive and a pitch for the Masters field, Crenshaw hit the General Eisenhower tree, a tall pine on the left of the fairway that generally plagued the President, and that Crenshaw ordinarily carries with no trouble. However, he was on the green in two with a lovely spoon shot. Hoch, after driving into the rough, took too much club on his second. His approach landed on the back fringe of the green and bounced some thirty yards over it. Hoch hadn't made a bogey all day, and it looked as if he would manage to escape one here when he played a soft little cut shot five feet past the flagstick. Crenshaw then rolled in a sinuous forty-footer for a birdie, and suddenly he was five under par. Hoch tapped his short putt too briskly, and the ball was by the cup before it could take the break. He, too, was now five under par with the home hole to play.

To tie Faldo at 283, Crenshaw and Hoch needed a par 4 on the testing eighteenth, which doglegs to the right as it climbs the hill to the clubhouse. Hoch played the hole flawlessly—on in two and down in two. Crenshaw found the fairway with his drive and had a 5-iron left. He hooked it into the left bunker, came out about twelve feet short of the pin, and missed the putt. In his interview, Crenshaw explained that, because of the constant rain, by the time he reached the eighteenth he had run out of dry towels to wipe his hands and the grip of his club. "I was trying for a nice 5-iron, and my club slipped," he said. "I pulled the shot, and that was that." Since this came from Crenshaw, you know that it is how things happened.

HOCH played the tenth, the first hole of the sudden-death playoff, much better than Faldo. Faldo cut his tee shot down the right side of the fairway, caught the bunker to the right of the green with his 3-iron approach, exploded some nine feet short of the hole, and missed his putt for his par. Hoch hit a good drive down the middle and was on the front of the green, about thirty feet below the hill, with a well-hit 6-iron. He rolled his approach putt about two feet past the hole. After Faldo missed his putt, Hoch lined up his two-footer. The difficult thing about it was that it was downhill. It looked to be a straight-in putt. Hoch appeared to take too much time thinking about the importance of his putt, and he may well have lost his concentration. When he hit it, he seemed to rush the stroke. The ball slipped by the left edge of the hole. He made about a five-footer coming back for his bogey.

On the eleventh, the 455-yard par 4 that is one of the most punishing holes on the course—Faldo had failed to par it on his four rounds—both men banged out good drives. Faldo to play first. He was granted relief from casual water in the fairway, and dropped his ball to the right. With the pin set at the back of the green, he hit a 3-iron. He couldn't have hit it much better. It flew over the right corner of the pond on the left, landed well on the green, and finished twenty-five feet short of the flag. Hoch's approach faded off line to the right and ended up some five yards to the right of the green, approximately hole-high. He chipped six feet short of the pin. Faldo's putt for the winning birdie broke about six inches to the left and rolled into the middle of the cup. It was Faldo's fifth birdie in the last eight holes he had played.

A word first about Scott Hoch. He could not have been more sporting as he talked about the tournament in the press-interview building. He said he had been confident about making the two-footer he missed on the first extra hole. "I didn't have a three-putt green all week," he explained. "I hit that putt too hard, and, on top of that, I pulled it." Hoch has won a great deal of prize money on the pro tour over the last seven seasons, but he has been unlucky on the major occasions. In 1979, he lost the final of the British Amateur championship to a fellow-American, Jay Sigel. In the 1987

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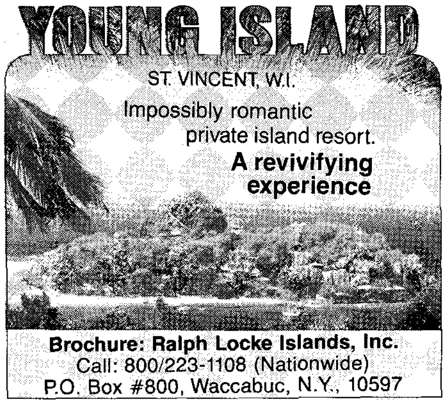

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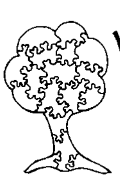

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P.G.A. Championship, at the P.G.A. National, in Palm Beach Gardens, Hoch had a six-foot putt on the last green to win the tournament. He not only missed that putt but then missed a very short one and lost a chance to get into a playoff for the championship, which was ultimately won by Larry Nelson. On the course, Hoch has a rather strutty manner, but I certainly admired his grace in defeat. (Three weeks later, Hoch won the Las Vegas Invitational tournament, on the fifth extra hole. He donated a hundred thousand dollars of the winner's two-hundred-and-twenty-five-thousand dollar purse to the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children & Women, in Orlando, where his young son Cameron spent a month in 1986 getting over a bone disease.)

Because of the continuing rain, the official presentation ceremony took place in the press-interview building. Hord Hardin, the chairman of the Masters, congratulated Faldo on his splendid victory. Sandy Lyle, the 1988 Masters victor, had missed the thirty-six-hole cut this year but had stayed on. Attired in a kilt at the presentation ceremony, he helped his good friend Faldo into the green jacket that is emblematic of winning the Masters. One of the bonds between the two men is that Lyle had several times previously captured a tournament that Faldo later carried off, the most important being the British Open. Lyle won it at Sandwich in 1985, Faldo at Muirfield two years later.

Faldo mentioned in his interview that, as one of the players who had not finished the rain-delayed third round, he had played the last six holes on Sunday morning. He had gone two over par on them, chiefly because of atrocious putting. In the interim between the end of the third round and the start of the fourth, he changed from the gooseneck putter he had been using to a blade putter with a small flange, and spent forty-five minutes on the practice green getting his stroke back. His attitude brightened up. "I was five shots back at the start of the last round," he said, "but I reminded myself that the Masters isn't a tournament that the leader usually wins." He was off fast. He birdied the first from fifty feet and the second from twelve feet. He sank a fifteen-footer from the back of the green for a birdie on the fourth and made a twenty-footer for another birdie on the seventh. He reached the turn in 32, and now he was two strokes under par for the tournament. On the eleventh, his rush came to a halt when he bunkered his approach shot and took a bogey 5. He got that stroke back on the thirteenth, the first of the two short par 5s, which he reached in two. He moved to three under par for the tournament when he put his approach to the fourteenth five feet from the pin. On the fifteenth, he laid up short of the pond and had to settle for a par. He got going again on the short sixteenth when he sank a fifteen-foot birdie putt that broke about six feet from left to right. Now, four under par for the tournament, he was back in the battle. On the 400-yard par-4 seventeenth, he was on in two thirty feet from the pin and then holed the critical putt for a birdie. "You watch the other guys, like Jack, do it," he said during his interview. "Then to have a day like I had today. To come back and do it yourself, it's some feeling. To stand and be looking at a putt, and then you knock it in. It's a dream, that's what it is—to imagine something and then have it happen."

Nicholas Alexander Faldo was born to a working-class family in Hertfordshire. He did a good deal of cycling growing up, but he was principally interested in golf. In the summer of 1975, he won the English Amateur and attracted the attention of Gerald Micklem. The son of a wealthy London merchant banker, Micklem, who died last May, had been educated at Winchester and Oxford in the late nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties, and had decided after the Second World War to devote himself to raising the standard of play of British amateurs to the level of American amateurs and so revive interest in the Walker Cup series. Later on, he became equally interested in upgrading the competence of professional golfers in the British Isles and in Continental Europe so that they could hold their own against the best players in the world. Faldo turned professional early, in 1976. When a friend asked Micklem, who knew the golf swing inside out, why he was devoting so much time to Faldo, he replied, "He is not easy to work with, but he is a chap with ambition who really wants to become a champion and will give everything he has to attaining this." In

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1977, Faldo became the youngest man ever named to the British Ryder Cup team. In 1979, when it was decided that a team made up of the best British professionals and the best professionals in Continental Europe would give the American professionals a better battle, he was named to the first European Ryder Cup team, and he has been a member of all the teams since. Although his tournament record was fairly good, in the mid-nineteen-eighties he managed to lose a number of events that he was in a position to win, and it became fashionable to refer to him as El Foldo. In 1986, disheartened by what he had not accomplished, he dropped out of the European Tour and spent the year rebuilding his swing under the guidance of David Leadbetter, the talented British instructor, who is currently the golf director at the Lake Nona Golf Club, in Orlando. Faldo, with his powerful legs, had previously used a rather restricted swing, in which he punched down and through the ball. Leadbetter, who also works with David Frost and other young touring professionals from overseas, lengthened Faldo's swing and taught him a more orthodox hitting action. Along with this, Faldo has developed a sounder temperament under the stress of tournament play. In 1987, he started the last round of the British Open one stroke behind Paul Azinger, the young American sensation. On that round, Faldo played eighteen consecutive pars and nipped Azinger by a stroke. (Micklem, thank goodness, lived to see the day.) In the 1988 U.S. Open, at The Country Club, in Brookline, Massachusetts, Faldo finished the seventy-two holes tied with Curtis Strange, but lost to him in an eighteen-hole playoff.

Now that Faldo has taken the Masters, British golfers have won it back to back and European golfers five times in the last ten years—Ballesteros in 1980 and 1983, and Bernhard Langer, of West Germany, in 1985. The world of international golf has changed in recent years. No American has captured the British Open since 1983, when Tom Watson won it for the fifth time. In 1985, the European team defeated the United States team in the Ryder Cup match at the Belfry Golf Club, in Sutton Coldfield, England—the first defeat that an American Ryder Cup team had suffered in twenty-eight years. In 1987, the European team retained possession of the cup when it defeated the United States team at the Muirfield Village Golf Club, in Dublin, Ohio. When the two teams meet again, in Sutton Coldfield, in late September, a great deal of esteem will be at stake. Since the decade following the end of the First World War, when Walter Hagen won the British Open four times (in 1922, 1924, 1928, and 1929) and Bobby Jones won it three times (in 1926, 1927, and 1930), American golfers have been recognized as the best in the world. Their superiority has never been as seriously challenged as it is today.

OH, yes. The recent Masters was, of course, won on the second nine, but this was a year in which the first nine played a particularly prominent role. On the first round, Trevino tackled the first nine when the wind was blowing at full force, and his phenomenal 32 set up his 67. On the second round, Faldo's 73, which tied him for the lead with Trevino at the halfway mark, depended on his 34 on the first nine. The 68 that got Norman back into the running on the third round was attributable partly to his finishing his round before the lightning storm began and partly to his 32 on the first nine. On the final round, Ballesteros dashed to the turn in 31, and that set up the suspenseful finish, in which no fewer than six golfers were in the fight down the stretch.

On my trip back to New York, I happened to pick up a copy of *USA Today*. Its coverage of the Masters included a chart called "The field vs. Augusta"—a breakdown of how the contestants played the individual holes over the four rounds, in terms of the number of eagles, birdies, pars, bogeys, and scores higher than a single bogey. The first hole proved to be the hardest of all, largely because of the stiff wind that blew directly into the golfer's face on that hole on the first two rounds. The twelfth was the second most difficult, followed by the sixteenth, the eleventh, and the tenth. The third hole turned out to be the sixth most difficult, and, somewhat surprisingly, the hardest hole of all on the final round. The fourth and fifth holes shared the distinction of tying as the eighth toughest. The sixth hole just slipped into the top ten. All in all, I'd say, the first nine acquitted itself very well indeed.

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LETTER FROM CASSINO

THE Polish Military Cemetery at Cassino, which holds the remains of a thousand and fifty-one Polish soldiers who died fighting in the Italian campaign during the Second World War, is a dramatic sight. It is situated on the slope of a hill, west of the town, that looks toward the abbey of Monte Cassino, which sits on a small peak about fifteen hundred feet above sea level and dominates its surroundings. As seen from above, the cemetery has the shape of a huge cross, with the graves lying in tightly banked ascending rows. They face the monastery from virtually the same angle that the men who perished here were forced to look at it from during the nearly six months—November 24, 1943, to May 18, 1944—they spent fighting to capture it and break through the German lines.

It was the Poles who launched the final, decisive attack on the position, on May 11, 1944, and they were at last able to raise the Polish colors above the ruins—the monastery had been devastated by bombs and artillery barrages—early on the morning of May 18th, but at a terrible cost. About a thousand men died in that last assault—an overall casualty rate of above forty per cent—and on the final morning most of the survivors were too exhausted even to climb the last couple of hundred feet to the site, abandoned the night before by the retreating German garrison. In this context, it is easy to understand the degree of fear and hatred the monastery inspired in most of the Allied soldiers who fought so long within sight of it. Thus the Polish cemetery seems to commemorate not only the fate of the soldiers who lie in it but the feelings of the living men who fought in these mountains and in the narrow valleys below: the cross seems an act of defiance, even an accusation, as well as a testimony to the agony of those who died here.

I had visited Cassino six years before, and, what with the presence in the area of five major military cemeteries, had experienced a sense of isolation and loss, of a great, abiding grief. I had spent only a few hours in the place, and hadn't gone to the monastery itself. Completely reconstructed along its original architectural lines, the abbey is the motherhouse of the Benedictine order, having been founded by St. Benedict himself around 529. It has long been known not only as a famous Christian monument but also as a center of learning and culture. Viewed from below, however, it had struck me as a forbidding, inaccessible place, a huge, pale fortresslike structure, perched as if in flight from the reality of human contact. It did not beckon travellers to it or seem to welcome any advance upon it but looked like an abandoned Valhalla, with narrow windows set high in massive walls that towered over terraced farmland. At that time of year, late spring, I had been told, the ascent to it was a slow process, along a narrow, twisting mountain road crowded with tourist buses and private cars. This time, on a clear but cold and windy early-November afternoon, the road was deserted and I had no trouble making my way up it.

The Polish cemetery is not clearly visible from the road until the very last part of the climb, when the route suddenly swings north around the mountain one last time and emerges into the open from between clumps of trees and bushes that have obscured the memorial. Brought up short by the sight of the memorial itself, I pulled over and then turned to the right, away from the abbey and down a long, narrow driveway into an empty parking lot. To reach the cemetery itself, I had to walk past a sculpture in the shape of a broken column: it bore an inscription in Italian saying that it had been erected in 1947 by the Casa Comunale of the City of Cassino and praising the *valorosi* of the Polish Army who had "fallen fighting on this bloody ground for the triumph of justice and liberty." The rest of the approach to the burial ground would take me up along the stem of the giant cross, outlined by tight rows of fat green cypresses. At the gate, I paused to stare upward at the tombs, with their rows of plain white crosses and Stars of David, all facing toward me and the monastery beyond. When I turned and looked back at the monastery, the building, windswept and isolated, seemed not merely

JOE'S
DINER
JOE'S CUISINE
217
Dana Fradon

forbidding but hostile. I was alone, and I had no desire to walk by myself up into the rest of the memorial, so after a few minutes, during which I looked about at a series of beautiful but desolate rocky mountain ridges surrounding the site, I walked back to my car and drove to a parking lot just below the monastery itself, comfortingly out of sight of the Polish dead.

THE abbey has long been a great tourist attraction as well as an active religious and educational center, so I wasn't surprised to find that I was not the only visitor, even on such a cold afternoon. There were several other cars in the lot, and as I walked up toward the main entrance a group of chattering Italian teen-agers emerged, along with a couple of cheerful-looking middle-aged priests, who had apparently just taken them on a tour—a sight that reassured me. I had been hesitant about entering the building, because almost everything I had heard and read about the place had been connected with the war and the privations that the soldiers of both sides had endured in the region round about. Now I hoped to experience some sense of the abbey as a haven, not only from the sound of guns but from the disquieting turbulence of modern life. After all, the Benedictines have been best known as educators and as preservers of antique texts and historical artifacts—especially those of the ancient Italic and Roman civilizations.

The part of the building accessible to the public, however, did little to dispel the uneasiness I had begun to experience in the Polish cemetery. The structure, in the form of an irregular rectangle, is enormous, about four hundred feet by five hundred and seventy, and is entered through a long corridor that slants upward into a large interior courtyard surrounded by a series of adjoining cloisters. Through the columned openings I caught magnificent views of the countryside, including the Polish memorial, but nothing on the premises provided a feeling of human warmth. The wind whistled through the open arches as I strolled about, pausing briefly to look at marble statues of St. Scholastica and St. Benedict. There were no flowers or plants to be seen, nor were there any signs of life at the windows of upper stories giving onto the courtyard. Benedict, I reminded myself, had founded monasticism in Western Europe and had set down rules of behavior, based on community living, manual labor, study, and prayer, for his monks. (Even so, these relatively moderate disciplines once led a group of his followers to try to poison him.) The building reflected the austerity of his order but not its humanism.

It was easy to understand, however, why Benedict of Nursia, as he was known during his lifetime, chose to take refuge on such a site. With the crumbling of the Roman Empire, the fertile valleys below were constantly being invaded, first by various barbarian hordes, then by the contending armies of noblemen, kings, and warlike prelates. Benedict was able to die peacefully on his mountaintop, around 547, but in 581 the place was sacked by the Longobards, and the surviving monks fled to Rome. This sort of catastrophe happened over and over during the ensuing centuries, with the monks returning each time to rebuild and to resume their peaceful activities. In the successive reconstructions, the monastery, not surprisingly, assumed more and more the characteristics of a fortress, and it took its present shape in the early part of the seventeenth century. Monte Cassino was sacked once more, in 1799, by an invading French Army, but then managed to remain inviolate until the Second World War, when, in the winter of 1943-44, the opposing forces on the Italian peninsula met face to face below it.

On my way out of the building that afternoon, I stopped at a small gift shop near the entrance, where the monks sell postcards and souvenirs. Many of the wares had to do with the most recent destruction and reconstruction of the monastery, and all of the dozen or so books and other publications I saw on sale were about what had happened there during that war-torn winter. A serious young monk was in charge, and when I asked him if they sold many of the volumes having to do with the war he told me that the subject never failed to come up, even when visitors merely looked into the shop. "You were here, too, I imagine," he observed. "Perhaps you flew with this American." He handed me a booklet whose cover depicted bombs raining on the monastery. Entitled "The Bombing of Monte Cassino," and published last year by the Pubblicazioni Cassinesi di Montecassino, the booklet

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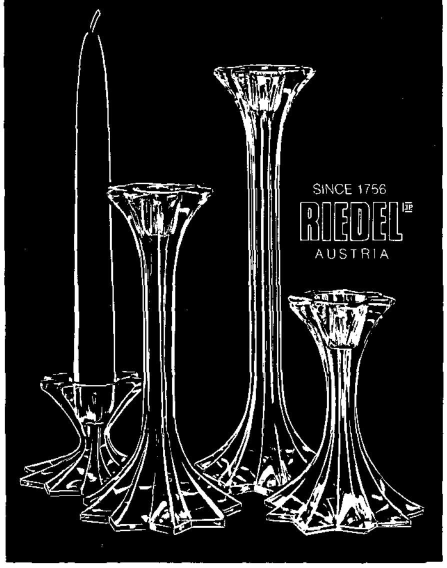

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is by Bradford A. Evans, who, as an Air Force major, had been the commanding officer of the 96th Bomb Squadron and had commanded the mission that destroyed the abbey, on February 15, 1944. He had since returned to the scene, interviewed several of the survivors, and written his own account of the event. His booklet included photocopies of military documents pertaining to the mission and a selection of before-and-after photographs of the monastery, the surrounding area, and some of the people, both soldiers and civilians, involved in the action. I discovered when I read it that night that Evans, like so many others who had participated in the battles around Cassino, had not been able to obliterate the memory of what had happened there. "From all wars, controversies are created, some to fade with time, others to linger like a cancer for years," he wrote.

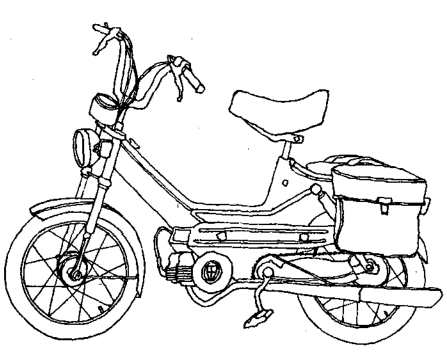
Along with the booklet, I bought several other publications, and told the young monk that although I had indeed been in the Air Force then and might easily have found myself over Cassino during the war, I had never left the States. I think he was disappointed. "So many of the men have returned," he said. "Not just Americans and English but many Germans, too."

On my way back to Cassino, I stopped, on impulse, at the German burial ground, which is situated along a ridge of low-lying hills a couple of miles north of the town. The cemetery is in the shape of a giant horseshoe, with concentric ascending rings of graves lying beneath rows of cypresses and pines. It is scrupulously tended by the Volksbund, a German organization entrusted specifically with the care and maintenance of the nation's war memorials. It is the largest of the cemeteries in the area. Twenty thousand and fifty-one men, most of whom died at Cassino, are buried there, sometimes as many as three to a tomb, and at the top of the horseshoe, on flat land, are several mass graves, beneath a tall, simple iron cross. At the time of the Italian campaign, the flower of Germany's armed forces were being chewed to pieces in a war of attrition on Russian soil, so a good many of the names on the tombstones here are those of men either in their late thirties and their forties or in their teens. A large number could not be identified at all except as *ein deutscher Soldat*—an unknown soldier who had been blown apart by mines, bombs, grenades, or artillery shells, and whose nationality could be established only by scraps of clothing, equipment, or weapons found with his remains.

It is a sobering and moving experience to visit any war memorial, and particularly when one happens to be alone in it, undistracted by the living. It was growing dark when I reached the top of the ridge, and I had very little time to look around, but I noted that only the very tip of the church cupola within the abbey walls was visible from there. It was a comforting sight, and as I looked at it a young couple in their twenties passed by, on their way out. I asked them if they spoke English and if they had a relative buried here. "*I'm* English," the young woman replied. "But my boyfriend's German. His uncle, his father's younger brother, is here. He was eighteen when he was killed."

NOTHING is left of the original town of Cassino, which in 1943 was a prosperous community of about seventeen thousand people at the foot of the mountain. Once known as Casinum and later as San Germano, it had been repeatedly sacked by barbarian adventurers and Saracen raiders but had begun to thrive again in the late Middle Ages, as an agricultural center and because it lay on the Casilina, one of two main roads built by the ancient Romans that linked the capital to Naples. Cassino had really begun to flourish in the late nineteenth century, as a railroad hub, and by the time the Nazi and Allied armies engaged each other on the Italian mainland the railroad made it an important strategic center, which the slowly retreating German forces were determined to defend as tenaciously as possible.

Much has been written about the horrors of this Italian campaign, and most military historians agree that it was one of the most misconceived and mismanaged actions, at least on the Allied side, in the history of warfare. The American Fifth and the British Eighth Armies, fresh from victories in North Africa and Sicily, landed at Salerno, near Naples, in September, 1943, and began slowly fighting their way north toward Rome. On the strategic level, no one on the Allied side had apparently bothered to worry much about the fact that throughout history most invaders, beginning with Hannibal, had recognized the foolishness of attempting to conquer Italy by marching up the boot from the south. A mere glance at a topographical map would have deterred any sensible commander. Except for the Po Valley, in the north, Italy consists of an almost unbroken chain of mountain ranges, many of which extend to one or both coasts, and which entirely dominate the narrow valleys the Allied armies proposed to advance along. The Germans, at this stage of the war, were outmanned, outgunned, and almost without an Air Force, but they still had a formidable Army, and their very able generals had been ordered by Hitler himself not to give up an inch of ground anywhere. John Ellis, an English military historian, whose "Cassino: The Hollow Victory" is a meticulously detailed and definitive account of the fighting there, notes that the Germans had plenty of time to select the best places to defend, and to dictate the circumstances of the battle. "Their whole Italian strategy now hinged upon the selection of suitable defensive lines behind which to deploy most effectively their overstretched but still determined divisions," he writes. "Monte Cassino, dominating as it did the most obvious route to Rome, the old Via Casilina or Highway Six as it was now known, was an obvious linchpin of such a line, being easily linked with the Aurunci Mountains to the south, reaching almost to the coast, and with the Cairo massif and the Simbruini Mountains to the north." The valleys around Cassino were also crisscrossed by a network of icy, swift-flowing streams, which the Allied troops would be compelled to cross while exposed to lethal fire from the defenders on fortified slopes above them.



During the laborious and costly Allied advance up from Salerno, therefore, the Germans, with the help of conscript and slave labor, constructed their so-called Gustav Line, and when the Allied troops arrived they hurled themselves against it in what amounted to suicidal frontal attacks. "The sufferings of these fighting troops, mainly 'the Poor Bloody Infantry,' cannot be overstated," Ellis notes. "Only such abattoirs as Verdun and Stalingrad, Passchendaele and Iwo Jima, can justly be compared. Four major assaults were launched against the fearsome defences that barred the way to Rome. Thousands died in these assaults and, in each interval, thousands more endured terrible privations as they shivered in their slit trenches and dugouts awaiting the order for the next attack, the next anguished scramble to prise the Germans off Monte This or Point That, the next suicidal dash into the murderous maze of pillboxes, wire and minefields that had once been some sleepy mountain village."

To compound their difficulties, the Allies were ineptly commanded, by generals who often disagreed on strategy and tactics. Mark Clark, the American commander, deeply distrusted his British nominal superior, Sir Harold Alexander, and did not always follow his orders. Both men had little respect for the other foreign troops—New Zealanders, Canadians, Indians, Poles, and French—fighting under them. These luckless contingents were smashed in frontal assaults on nearly impregnable positions, at a tremendous cost in lives. Only the French were ably commanded, by General Alphonse Juin, and he ultimately, in May of 1944, conceived and executed a daring flanking maneuver that finally broke through the Gustav Line and forced the Germans to retreat. He and his men received little credit for it, and most often his suggestions were ignored. (After the breakthrough, he urged on his superiors a wheeling tactic that might have cut off the Germans' retreat and prevented them from regrouping to fight again, but Clark, who had a personal photographer assigned to his staff, was obsessed with liberating Rome himself, and so the Nazi divisions were allowed to escape to the north, where, in the mountains around Florence, they prolonged the campaign through another bloody winter.) Major General Fred L. Walker, the commander of the United States 36th Division, which was decimated in late January in its attempt to cross the Rapido River—a poorly planned and poorly executed maneuver, in which American troops were repulsed and suffered appalling casualties—noted in his diary before the final assault, "I expect this attack to be a fizzle just as was the one last night. The stupidity of the higher commanders seems to be never-ending."

About eighty thousand Allied soldiers were killed or wounded in these battles, and the Germans lost fifty-five thousand men, a casualty total reminiscent of the trench warfare in the First World War. We Americans lost nearly as many men in a few weeks at Cassino as we did during the first year of heavy fighting in the Vietnam War.

The figures, however, reflect neither the degree of suffering experienced by the troops nor what happened to the civilians living in the paths of the armies. Military historians, understandably, ignore this aspect of the fighting, except to note the capture and/or destruction of specific communities. Not only was Cassino itself levelled but at least thirty of the surrounding villages also ceased to exist, and a couple of dozen others were partly destroyed. As for the inhabitants, there are no accurate statistics on their losses and no memorials to their sacrifices. The Italians have their Sacrario Militare at Monte Lungo, ten miles south of Cassino, containing the graves of about a thousand men who fell during the so-called War of Liberation, from 1943 to 1945. The monument features an austere-looking chapel of white marble but is otherwise the most warlike of those in the area, with old artillery pieces flanking its entrance. A small museum across the road displays tanks, guns, and vivid pictures of the entire Italian campaign, and provides a detailed account of an isolated local action in which, for a week in December, 1943, units of the regular Italian Army fought for the first time against the Germans, their former allies. There is not a word about the civilian dead, however, and no mention of what happened to all the people whose homes and property were destroyed.

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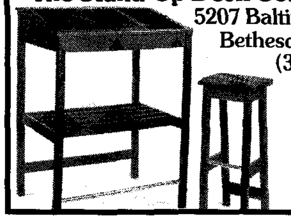

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temporarily without any fighting took refuge with them; but many thousands were forced to flee into the mountains, and hid there in caves or shepherds' huts, or slept in the open, and survived sometimes for months on handouts from the local people and on what they could forage. The soldiers were mostly too busy killing one another to pay much attention to them, though the Germans usually seized any able-bodied men they could find, and forced them to work on a series of fortified lines being constructed to halt the Allied advance up the boot. (Behind the Gustav Line at Cassino the Germans had established several fallback positions, and ultimately these successfully delayed the Allies while the remains of the retreating panzer divisions escaped to the north.)

The inhabitants of Cassino who were still there when the opposing forces prepared to confront each other along the Gustav Line, in December of 1943, either headed for the monastery or scrambled up the adjacent mountain slopes. As the fighting intensified and the Germans began to occupy all the strategic high points in the area, including caves and huts that could be converted into fortified positions or storage depots, the refugees not already inside the abbey or camped around it found themselves with nowhere else to go. By mid-January, escape in any direction was made all but impossible by incessant artillery and mortar fire and by a carpet of hidden minefields the Germans had established all around their defenses. The women, children, and old men who had tried to survive on their own wound up heading for the monastery, the one place left that they could hope would remain inviolate.

They had some reason to think that it might. Even though the abbey gave the appearance of being a formidable strong point within the German lines, it had not been occupied by troops, and, according to the monks themselves, was not being used even as an observation post. The Germans were dug in below it on all sides and were using several large caves in the vicinity, mainly as ammunition dumps, but they had declared the building itself off limits, and in early December they had established a "non-military zone" of about three hundred yards all around it.

As for the Allies, it was well known that they had adopted an official policy of not destroying religious and cultural shrines unless it could be clearly established that they were being used for military purposes. "We are bound to respect those monuments so far as war allows" was the key clause in a memorandum that General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces, had issued to subordinates on December 29, 1943. But he had left the decision about a building's fate up to his officers in the field. Nevertheless, with the presence of so many civilians in the immediate area and some of the monks themselves still inside the monastery, it seemed unlikely, if not inconceivable, that anyone would launch a direct attack on Monte Cassino itself. It would have been construed as an act of barbarism, with unfortunate propaganda repercussions all over the world. By the time the battles at Cassino began, there were about a thousand civilians, some of them ill and many of them children, either inside the walls or in a cluster of stone farm buildings immediately below the walls.

THE Germans had been trying to get everyone, including the monks, out of the monastery since mid-October, when they informed the abbot, Gregorio Diamare, who was then seventy-nine, that the main defense line had been established through the town of Cassino and therefore the area would undoubtedly come under fire. General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, the commander of the XIV Panzer Corps, who was directly in charge of the Cassino sector, was one of those exquisitely educated professional soldiers the Germans seem able to produce in every war. Deeply cultured and a devout Catholic, he despised Hitler and the whole Nazi regime but fought brilliantly on every front to which he was assigned. His main concern in regard to the monastery, as it was reflected by the attitude and the actions of his junior officers, was spiriting off to safety the order's artistic and cultural patrimony. His men also offered to help with the packing and the transportation north toward Rome of the entire community.

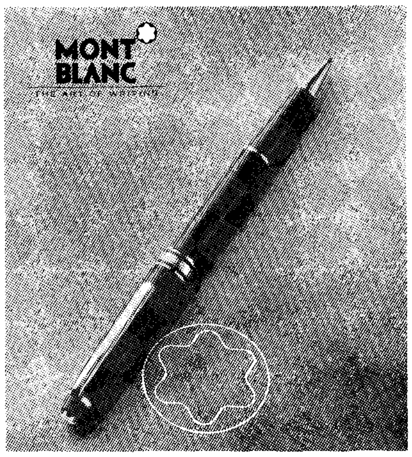
The monks chose to make use of these services but not to abandon the abbey completely. Nor did they completely trust the Germans. They never disclosed to them the existence of many precious objects temporarily stored there, including a valuable collection of ancient Greek and Roman coins from the Numismatic Museum of Syracuse. They packed the cases themselves and managed to keep the soldiers from knowing exactly what was in all the large wooden crates being dispatched to Rome for safekeeping. During the two weeks it took to move everything out, a team of German photographers and cameramen recorded the event, citing it as a typical example of the German armed forces' civilized behavior and concern for European culture, compared with the barbarism of the Anglo-American invaders. They also persuaded the abbot to make the further gracious gesture of allowing them to film a High Mass, held for their officers and troops in the main chapel as the job was coming to an end.

The last two trucks left on the morning of November 3rd, by which time only eleven monks (including Abbot Diamare), some of the monastery's lay employees and their families, and the refugees remained inside the walls or in the vicinity. Two weeks later, the Germans began systematically to blow up the town of Cassino and to fortify the ruins. They also worked incessantly all around the abbey, well inside the non-military zone, preparing observation posts, gun emplacements, and ammunition dumps. When the abbot protested that such preparations violated the neutrality of Monte Cassino and the very conditions that the Germans themselves had established for its salvation, he was assured that the matter would be taken care of, and the monks were not to trouble themselves about it.

From time to time, German officers dropped in on the monastery, either for a cup of tea or for a casual tour of the grounds, and they were almost unfailingly cordial, and sympathetic to the abbot's plight. The monks began to feel safe. A wartime diary kept by one of them, Don Eusebio Grossetti, records that life inside the walls went on "peacefully enough," with everyone attending to his duties, and the abbot working in his study on his private archives. No one seemed much concerned about the increasing number of Allied air raids over the surrounding countryside or the constant booming of the guns and the explosions among houses below. In the evenings, the little community watched the artillery barrages and speculated on what might happen next.

In late December, the Germans suddenly ordered all civilians out of the monastery and also rounded up and removed everyone they found outside the walls. Then, on January 5, 1944, they declared that they would no longer respect the non-military zone, and asked the monks to leave as well. They sent three trucks with Italian drivers and some military policemen to take everyone away except for a few people in the infirmary, who were too ill to be moved. The abbot, however, proved to be a wily negotiator. He reminded the German officers in charge of the evacuation that he had always had good relations with the High Command, and declared that he and his monks would leave only under duress. They were allowed to remain, and no further attempt was made to force them out, probably because by then the fighting along the Gustav Line had become so heavy that no one involved in it had time to bother anymore about the fate of the abbey.

All during January, civilians hiding out on the surrounding slopes were being wounded and killed, mostly by artillery and mortar shells, and once again the monastery became the only obvious place of refuge. By early February, there were again about a thousand people camped on the grounds, most of them inside the walls, but even there they were not safe. The abbey had become to the Allied troops below it a symbol of frustration and an object of hatred, and their gunners had begun to shell it regularly. The monks had warned the refugees inside not to wander near the cloisters or into the open courtyard, but even so people were killed nearly every day. Don Martino Matronola, who on January 29th had



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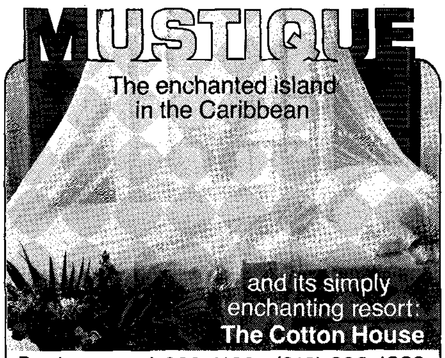
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assumed the task of keeping the journal started by Don Eusebio (who had been forced to abandon it because of illness), noted that "we are now impotently witnessing the gradual destruction of the abbey, with our hearts full of bitterness." He wondered if there was some way of notifying the Allies that they were firing on a neutral building full of innocent people, but he was told by a German medical officer visiting the infirmary that the Allies knew what they were doing and could see that no shots were coming from inside the abbey. "On the other hand," Don Martino noted the next day, "if the Germans are really such praiseworthy or, better, self-styled saviors of civilization, why haven't they given up their position on Monte Cassino? One day, history will provide an impartial judgment."

On the afternoon of February 14th, several boys scrambled outside the walls to retrieve handfuls of leaflets that had been fired over the mountain slopes during the early morning by the guns of the Fifth Army. Addressed to "Italian Friends," the flyers, under the headline "BEWARE!," delivered the following message:

> We have until now been especially careful to avoid shelling the Monte Cassino monastery. The Germans have known how to benefit from this. But now the fighting has swept closer to its sacred precincts. The time has come when we must train our guns on the monastery itself.
>
> We give you warning so that you may save yourselves. We warn you urgently: Leave the monastery. Leave it at once. Respect this warning. It is for your benefit.
>
> THE FIFTH ARMY

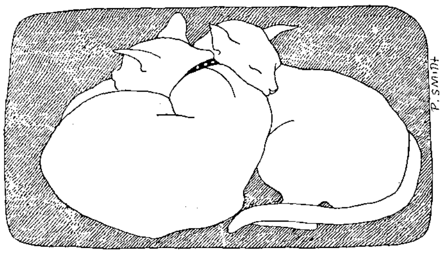
No one knew exactly what to expect from this message, but there was no way to leave the area except through the German lines, and the monks and refugees feared that any attempt at a mass exodus would be met by gunfire. They were told to await the arrival of a German officer early the next day, who would presumably bring them word from the Vatican about what to do. When an officer did show up the following morning, however, it was to assure the monks that the message was an Allied propaganda stunt, and he forbade anyone to try to leave. After he had gone, the monks resumed their morning routines. At nine-twenty-eight, as they were reciting prayers in the abbot's temporary quarters, a subterranean room below the chapel, the first bombs began to fall.

"The thick walls of our refuge, with everything in it, shook in a terrifying way," Don Martino recalled in his diary entry. "Dust and smoke entered through the narrow windows." A woman named Oslavia Pignatelli, who had taken refuge with her parents and another family in the post office (where the gift shop is now), told Major Evans years later that the first twelve bombs from his squadron probably saved their lives. They had wanted to move to the lower levels of the building but had been prevented by a set of locked doors. The initial blasts blew the doors open and allowed the refugees to escape from an area that was totally demolished later in the day.

Four hundred and forty-two tons of explosives were dropped on the monastery that day, in two separate attacks by more than two hundred planes. No one has ever been able to make an exact count of the civilian casualties from these raids, but at least three hundred perished inside the walls, while others were killed trying to escape. It has been established that about two thousand citizens of Cassino alone died during the battles that winter.

At dawn on February 16th, almost all the civilians inside the abbey fled, leaving behind about forty people, a few of them badly wounded, the rest women, children, and old people, and the monks themselves. The Allies continued to shell the building as if it were still a fortress, while the survivors were still trying to find a way to leave. "By now, we have persuaded ourselves that there is nothing to be hoped from men," Don Martino wrote that evening.

Finally, early the next morning, the courageous abbot led the survivors out on foot, and the little column made its way down the north side of the mountain, under occasional bursts of artillery fire, to a medical way station not far from the Casilina. In the afternoon, as bombs were once again raining down on the abbey, a German ambulance took the monks away toward Rome, and the next day the religious community was joyfully reunited in the capital—but not before the abbot, at the insistence of General von Senger und Etterlin, made a statement on radio that the monastery had never been used by the Germans for military purposes. (Three days earlier, he had signed a declaration to that effect.) Don Martino, for one, understood the reason for this move. "The German Command wanted to free itself with clean hands of the abbot and the monks in order to take possession of the ruins of the monastery for warlike purposes," he noted later.



And, in fact, the bombing of the abbey turned out to be enormously useful to the Germans. The walls of the main building were a hundred and fifty feet high and ten feet thick and, in their partly ruined state, provided just the sort of secure fortifications behind which troops could fire at will on their attackers. Since the building's neutrality had clearly been violated, there was no longer any reason not to make use of it, and for the next three months Nazi troops poured down deadly fire upon the wretched Allied forces.

The Allied bombing had originally been requested by the commander of an Indian division, whose men were about to be used in still another of the suicidal frontal attacks that constituted the Allied offensives at this time. The bombing may have worked briefly as a morale booster, but it exacted a fearful toll later. Only Clark, in one of his few moments of military prescience, opposed it, and he was overruled. As for the enlisted men, who suffered the most, their attitude remained one of undiminished loathing. "I don't know how a monastery can be evil," a British soldier declared later, in defense of the operation, "but it was looking at you. It was all-devouring, if you like—a sun-bleached color, grim. It had a terrible hold on us soldiers."

APART from the war memorials round about, there is little today to remind anyone of the horrors experienced here during that winter of 1943-44. Having been completely rebuilt, the town of Cassino has resumed its traditional role of a bustling commercial and agricultural hub, now with a population of about thirty thousand. Since 1967, when an industrial zone was created on its outskirts, it has also been a manufacturing center, and one of such importance that there has been talk of making the city the capital of a new province. To an outsider's eye, it looks like any of a hundred other new towns or suburbs, with its two main streets—the Via de Nicola and the Corso della Repubblica—full of cars and trucks and its shops crowded with buyers.

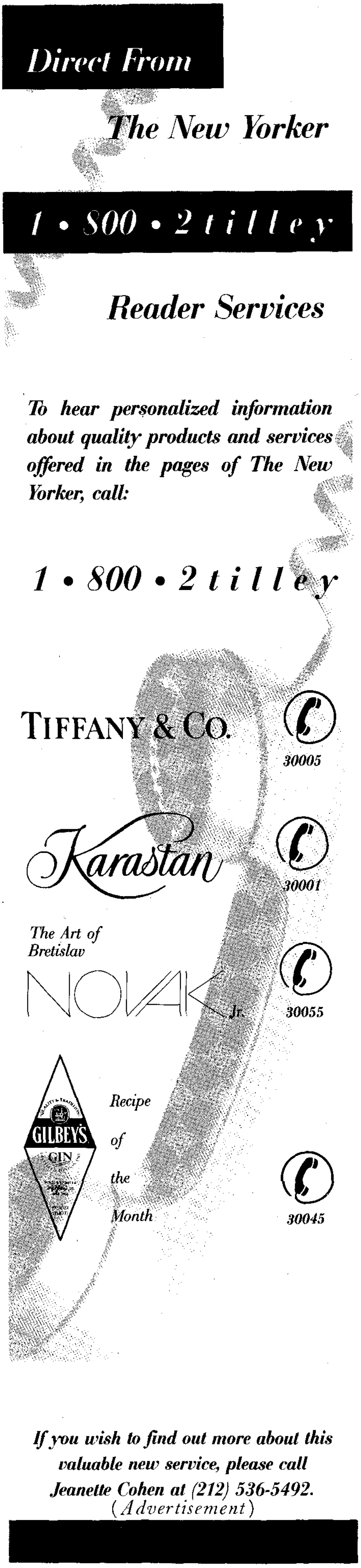
Italy, however, is a country of dramatic contrasts between its past and its postwar industrial development. Nearly every town, even the smallest village, retains a core of old buildings, many of them dating back to Roman times and usually protected by law from overdevelopment. These neighborhoods look much the same as they have since the Middle Ages and continue to impart to the nation that sense of its great past which has delighted visitors for centuries. What is unique about Cassino and most of the surrounding towns and villages is the complete absence of a *centro storico* and, indeed, of any building antedating the war. The city was rebuilt in a hurry and chaotically, with almost no attention paid to aesthetics or to a feeling for the environment. The new buildings are plain and functional, most of them having been designed to imitate the cold austerity of the architecture favored by Benito Mussolini and his Fascist government, with its dreams of vanished glory. The result is a sprawl of colorless, boxlike constructions of the kind seen in public-housing projects, and almost unrelieved by gardens or parks or friendly cobblestoned piazzas. There is nothing in downtown Cassino, or in the surrounding villages, to hold a visitor for a minute beyond a need to eat or stop at a gas station.

The people of Cassino, not surprisingly, are reluctant to recall the past. The few who will talk about the war remember it mainly as a time of anguished waiting, in which their lives seemed to be suspended in a void. "I left before the Allies arrived," a woman I met in a bookstore told me. She was in her late seventies and owned a nearby pharmacy. "My husband had been wounded in North Africa and had stayed home after the Armistice. With our two children, we went to be with relatives in the Abruzzi, near Anticoli Corrado. Every day, we expected the Allies to come, but the shepherds would return from the hills only with news of bombardments, the sound of distant guns. We had no word of anything that was happening at Cassino. It was only after we went back that we understood what had happened."

There is little in the people's daily lives to remind them of the war. Central Cassino has no statues or monuments, or even commemorative plaques—merely the small black-and-white road signs indicating the way to the various military cemeteries. "Only the tourists go there," a woman behind a bar situated in the middle of town informed me. "No one cares anymore. The young do not know about it, and the old speak of it only to each other. It is finished now."

Nothing in the area recalls the American involvement in the battle, either; the nearest American cemetery is at Nettuno, near Anzio, about sixty miles from Cassino. Nor are the French, whose final attack was crucial, remembered except as objects of terror. *I Marocchini*, as the Italian civilian population called all the French troops, most of whom were from North Africa, were accused of looting every village they liberated and raping as many of the inhabitants as they could get their hands on. "Men, women, children, it didn't matter to them," the proprietor of a Cassino restaurant where I had lunch told me. "They had no stake in the war. To them it was an adventure."

I drove southeast about twelve miles to the town of Venafro. It sits in a valley through which the French had fought on their way up to Cassino, and in which their dead are now buried. It is the most desolate of the war memorials I visited, partly because it is so isolated from the others, and also because very few relatives of the North African soldiers buried there ever visit the graves. About three-fourths of the three thousand four hundred and fourteen men entombed here are Muslims, but they all lie under similar headstones that declare each one "*mort pour la France*" and, as a separate commemorative plaque proclaims, "gloriously fallen, 1943-44." I was given a spontaneous tour of the cemetery by three young Italians, who take care of it, and whom I found huddled about a small electric stove in a stone cabin where they store their tools. They seemed delighted to have an outsider to talk to, and were eager to point out to me how immaculately and lovingly the graves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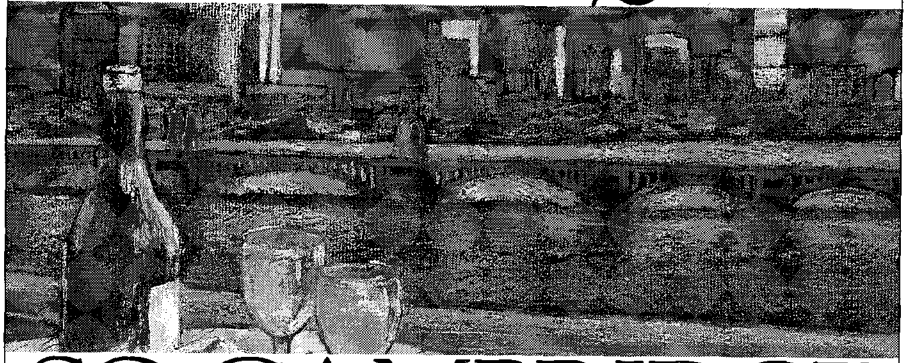

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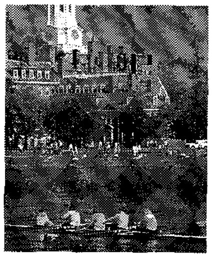

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were seen to, laid out in long rows across a grassy expanse of flat, treeless land. "It's a shame so few people come," one of them said. "It is as if all these men died for nothing." I was left with an almost overpowering feeling that perhaps the woman behind the bar in Cassino had been right—that no one cared, and soon no one would remember.

Later I visited the British memorial, which also rests on flat land, about a mile outside Cassino. Four thousand two hundred and sixty-five men are buried here, among them some whose identity is "known only to God." They lie in even rows of graves under modest tombstones and surrounded by a line of umbrella pines. There are also monuments paying tribute to men buried elsewhere, whose graves have been lost, and to an estimated four thousand British soldiers whose bodies were never found. The cemetery is lovingly tended by Italian caretakers, who have planted along the rows of tombs various herbs and red-rose bushes, some of them still in bloom during my visit. The place seemed the most human of the memorials I saw, partly because many of the stones bear inscriptions, occasionally in verse. One of them summed up my own feelings about the region and what I had learned during my stay. "He gave of his best, his unfinished life," read the inscription for T. Brown, of the King's Regiment, who was killed on May 12, 1944, at the age of thirty.

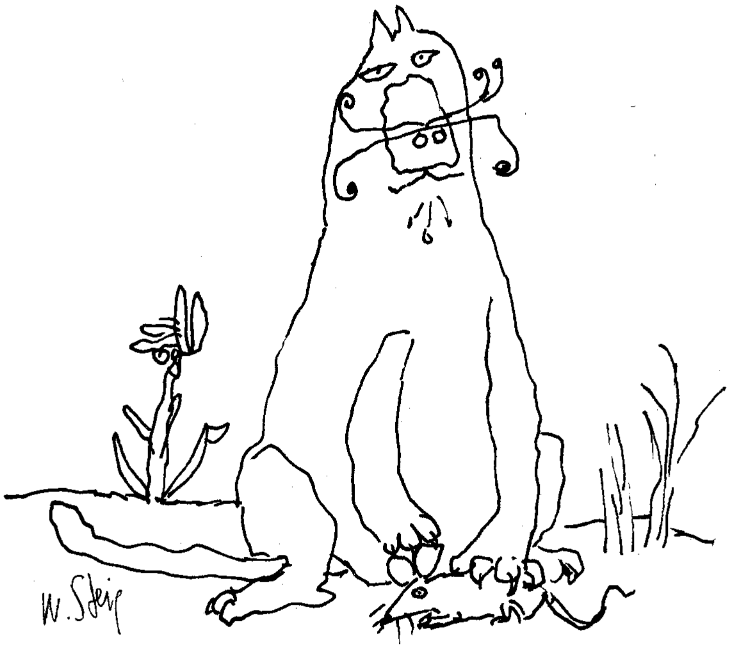
On the south side of the cemetery, under a simple stone bower furnished with a marble bench, I found the register of the dead and a large black notebook, in which visitors are asked to write their names and addresses and to make comments. Most of the people who had passed through recently were British, as was to be expected, but, to my surprise, I noticed quite a few Italian names. The day before my arrival, a group of ten or twelve young people from Cassino had come there, obviously for the first time, and had clearly been moved by their visit. "This must never happen again," one young man had commented. His friends had limited themselves to a single phrase. "Love and peace," they had written, over and over, the words marching eloquently down one side of the page, as if nothing else could atone for what had happened there.

—William Murray

THE CURRENT CINEMA

Young Stuff

SCANDAL, Oscar Wilde said, is "gossip made tedious by morality," and that's a pretty fair description of "Scandal," the new English film about the Profumo affair. It's understandable that the (first-time) director, Michael Caton-Jones, and the writer, Michael Thomas, try to avoid the spirit of tabloid sensationalism. It was the tabloids that, in 1963, exploited a sexual indiscretion: During July and August of 1961, John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War in Macmillan's Tory Government, visited the teen-age showgirl Christine Keeler at the West End flat of an obliging osteopath, Stephen Ward. Since Christine also dallied with a Russian who was the assistant naval attaché of the Soviet Embassy, the papers took up the cry of the danger to national security. Profumo, who at first, in an address to the House of Commons, denied any impropriety, had to confess his lie, and he resigned from his Cabinet post. But the hullabaloo about ruling-class depravity would not die, and eventually the government fell. By then, Ward, who had been thrown to the mob—tried on trumped-up charges of living off the earnings of prostitutes—had killed himself. But "Scandal," in keeping a tasteful distance from the prurient tabloids, has replaced spicy dirt with an oversympathetic tone and the easy irony that the generous-hearted Ward (who ran with the upper class but wasn't born to it) had been made the scapegoat. Ward the victim, played by John Hurt, is the hero of the picture.



Second Thoughts

Hurt is an absolute master of pathos, and at first the shadings in his manner are unexpected, but the moviemakers' soft interpretation of Ward turns "Scandal" into just one more English film about the cruelty of the class system. As Hurt plays him, Ward has a dreamy, awed look in his eyes when he's girl-watching on the street; he seems to regard life as infinitely benign. And he has a carefree, giddy vacancy when he's among lords and ladies. He's highly regarded as an osteopath (Ward massaged and manipulated a number of royal backs, and many celebrated ones: Averell Harriman's, Winston Churchill's, Elizabeth Taylor's), but he's not very strongly driven, in physical terms. He seems almost neuter (like the film itself), and a voyeur rather than an active participant. Where I think the movie goes off is in presenting Ward as the noble underdog. Even though he wasn't the paid pimp that the court accused him of being, he pandered to the sexual appetites of the aristocrats. He picked up hedonistic young working-class girls and trained them to tempt and tease the upper class; the girls he supplied to the wealthy and powerful were his ticket into society. (His weekend cottage at Cliveden, Lord Astor's estate, was rented to him for one pound a year.)

And Ward's voyeurism had a side that the movie doesn't show: his sitting room was equipped with a two-way mirror, so that he and his guests could observe the action in the bedroom. He may not have slept with his houseguests, such as the seventeen-year-old Christine Keeler (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer) and her sixteen-year-old showgirl pal Mandy Rice-Davies (Bridget Fonda), but he probably got what he wanted out of them. Ward the social-climbing panderer couldn't handle success: when he became part of the circle he'd aspired to, he got so carried away that be began to fancy himself a diplomat and a James Bond. "Scandal" sacrifices the rich comic possibilities in the sort of self-loathing man who's sexually turned on by being in close proximity to wealth and power. Instead, it makes Ward a warmly tolerant fellow who just wants to be liked, and tries to turn the material into a love story between him and Keeler. That leaves us puzzled; there's something missing. It's the blundering side of this ultra-nice peeper, Stephen Ward. Without it, what might be a satirical slice of history is a sentimental docudrama.

Visually, the movie is fairly supple and efficient, but it's intellectually mediocre. There must be a better angle on the Profumo affair than humanizing Stephen Ward. "Scandal" shows (and tells) us the obvious, and posts little flags at the sites of groundwork for future plot developments. Stephen recollects his schoolboy experience of being flogged for a petty offense that the schoolmasters knew he didn't commit—a scapegoat even then, always the outsider. Some of this is based on factual material, but it's presented in an exhausted dramatic format. We observe this kind and loving man who sorrows for the confused Keeler (after she has done him in by chattering to the press—for money), and we observe that yes, Stephen's idle-rich friends desert him when he's in trouble.

What sustains a viewer is the narrative, with its evocative details—how Keeler, bored with the middle-aged dignitaries that Ward introduced her to, took on a West Indian lover and then another West Indian, and how, as a result of a violent quarrel between the two, a newspaperman got on her trail. (She then offered up the story of her earlier gentleman callers, Profumo and the Russian.) There are also details of the public indignation

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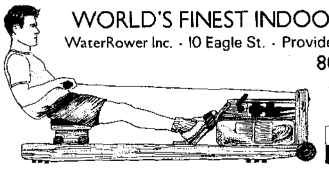

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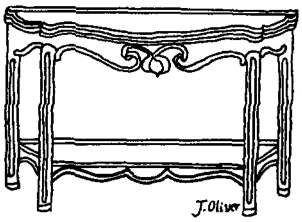
over the decadence of the "Establishment"—over sadomasochism and spies and naked bathing in Lord Astor's pool. The movie skims the years from 1959 to 1963, and there's Ward introducing Christine to hash and her becoming spacey, and the music changing, and the kinky Victorian repressiveness giving way to London's Swinging Sixties.

Ian McKellen's Profumo, with two bald streaks running up his skull, may be reminiscent of Martyn Green as the Lord High Executioner, but he has a wry dignity. No doubt Profumo's lines had to be written with care that he would have no grounds for a lawsuit; McKellen doesn't say much—he communicates the character's thoughts by teeny flickers of expression. He's rather marvellous at suggesting Profumo's awareness of the risks he's taking when he whips around town in his Rolls with his ladylike trollop. And the Dutch actor Jeroen Krabbé, who plays the Russian attaché, has a great camera face and physique. (He can bring a theatricality—a whiff of danger—to a scene.)

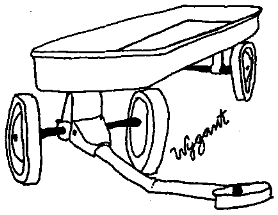
But, finally, the movie comes down to the girl: How is she? And the answer is: Not quite right. Joanne Whalley-Kilmer is a skilled actress, and she was doe-eyed perfection as the nurse in "The Singing Detective," but she seems too polished, too refined here—a little wan. She's incredibly pretty, the way Olivia de Havilland was when she played in "The Adventures of Robin Hood"; you look at her as Christine Keeler and never quite "get" her. You don't get a fix on why she obliges older men whom she isn't attracted to, and you don't believe the film's explanation that she does it for love of Ward. By the end, we seem meant to find Christine tragic, but most of us will probably just think her vaguely unhappy. Deep down, under her genteel exterior, the Christine Keeler of the movie has to be a harlot, and the only time I felt that Whalley-Kilmer got close to that was in her first scene, when Christine is doing her act, among the night-club showgirls, and eying the customers. She has a tarty coquettishness; you can believe that she's a kid playing at harlotry—trying it on—and this game plan gives her a cheap, raw-edged gorgeousness, but she loses it almost at once. The later Christine is appealing but elusive, unreadable; maybe that's what the moviemakers wanted, but it doesn't seem enough.



Bridget Fonda's impudent platinum-blond Mandy—a teen-age "kept woman" with the hawk eyes of an old madam—is the movie's only wild card. Fonda shows some of the comic flair that her aunt Jane showed in movies such as "The Chapman Report"; her dryness has a provocative, taunting assertiveness. She's gauchely young and tall, and when she's flouncing around the night-club dressing room in her spangled scanties she's like an adolescent drag queen. Fonda is onscreen just briefly, but her gamine crispness makes you aware of how sickly-holy the film's point of view is.

As the nineteen-year-old jock Lloyd Dobler in the high-school romance "Say Anything," John Cusack goes around Seattle with a hipster's deadpan and question marks in his eyes. He has a crush on the class valedictorian, Diane Court (Ione Skye), who is a dedicated student and has never socialized with her classmates; she's Lloyd's ideal, and he's determined to ask her to go to the graduation party with him. His friends advise him that she's out of his reach; they're sure she'll turn him down, and under his mask of confidence (which fools nobody) he's terrified of rejection. When he gets Diane on the phone, he can't keep up a sequential conversation; he babbles, and talks in spurts—he riffs. He's irresistible; she says yes. When he's out with her, his heart is in his mouth, but he knows to talk when he's nervous, and he makes Diane feel protected and happier than she has ever been. As for Lloyd, he's found bliss. He wants to hang on to her—for life.

"Say Anything" is unabashedly romantic about Lloyd Dobler's capacity to make a commitment. It's a slight movie, but that's not a put-down. Its slightness has to do with the writer-director Cameron Crowe's specialty: he's wired into teen-age flakes and the sloppy, exuberant confusion of high-school dating. Crowe is great here on oddity and fringe moments; the comedy helps to dry out the romanticism—to give it lightness and a trace of enchantment. And John Cusack's performance is distinctive enough for you to think you might remember the name Lloyd Dobler—that he stands for something, like Jacques Tati's Mr. Hulot. There's a sequence with its own pop magic: when Lloyd feels he's lost Diane he tries to puzzle out what happened—he talks into a tape recorder, going over the events of their time together, as he drives through all the places they went to. And I've never seen anything like the image of the forlorn Lloyd serenading Diane with a boom box: he stands in the secluded area outside her house holding the box over his head, with Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" resonating among the trees.



Some of the film's best characters and scenes could be mistaken for throwaways. There's the girl (Lili Taylor) who comes to the graduation party with her guitar, prepared to sing sixty-five songs she has written about the perfidiousness of the ex-boyfriend who drove her to attempt suicide. Crowe lets the scene run long enough for us to see the self-dramatizing elation that's crowding out her self-pity—she's burstingly angry that she was cheated on, and she wants the world to know that she's alive now and making music. Crowe—he wrote "Fast Times at Ridgemont High"—keeps faith with teen-agers; he doesn't generalize about them (or about the older generation, either).

A couple of astonishingly fluid scenes between Cusack and his real-life sister Joan suggest the love and the tensions between Lloyd and his older, divorced sister, whom he lives with—the two of them are Army brats. She crabs at him for a second when he does a comedy routine with her small son, and he reminds her that she used to be "warped and twisted and hilarious." You feel the sourness of her divorce and her single-parent situation; everything clues you in to why Lloyd wants stability and why he's determined that his love for Diane last forever. But none of this is overdone. John Cusack underplays Lloyd's decency and strength—takes them for granted. And Crowe and his editor, Richard Marks, know when to nip a scene off; the movie has abrupt, eccentric rhythms. You don't feel like a ninny for watching a high-school movie.

This first picture that Crowe has directed is a lovely piece of work—despite a dumb idea at its center. When Lloyd is asked what his goal is, he says, "To be with Diane." He doesn't know what he wants to do yet; that makes sense. But there's too much emphasis on Diane's braininess—her genius. It's as if she were going to be his higher calling, as in a magnificent-obsession novel. And all the solicitude about Diane's future as a member of some cosmic think tank is puzzling, because as Crowe has written her, and as Ione Skye plays her, she's just a nice, intelligent, industrious girl—a model grind. The talk of her brilliance seems like some kind of mistake; there isn't a lick of flash or fun in the character. Mostly, she just smiles big.

Diane's father (John Mahoney) has been pushing her to ever higher academic achievement all her life; they have had a mutually adoring relationship. Her shift from being close to Daddy to being close to Lloyd is almost a parody of the lives of properly raised girls who went directly from their fathers' houses to their husbands' houses. (In giving Diane a new protector, the movie seems to be using the excuse of her high intelligence to treat her as a frail creature.) The story turns into a battle of wills between Lloyd and the father. John Cusack and Mahoney have to carry the unconvincing melodramatic portion of the plot, but they carry it stunningly. Mahoney never tries to turn his character into a lovable fellow; there's a mean, self-serving streak in his Mr. Court that's almost dazzling. And Cusack is a wonder: Lloyd's (nearly) blank look tells you that a lot of things are going on inside him—he has a buzz in his blank face. Cusack is a joyous performer, and at the party he's joined by the radiant, blond Kim Walker; Loren Dean, as the face that launched sixty-five songs; Jason Gould, as an amiable drunk; Eric Stoltz; Amy Brooks; and Chynna Phillips, among many others. Every one of them makes you smile. There's no special moviemaking excitement in "Say Anything," but Cameron Crowe is a real director—he loves actors.

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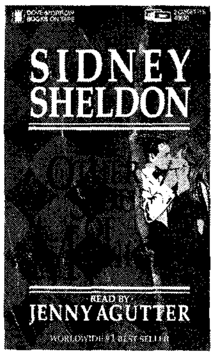

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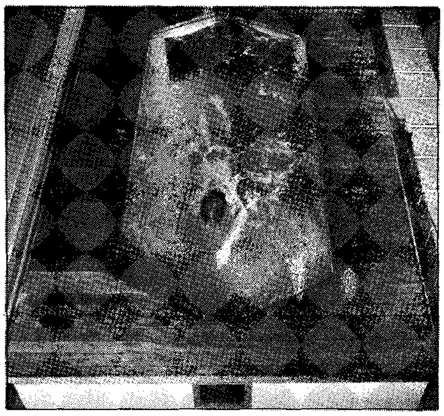

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Demoniasis

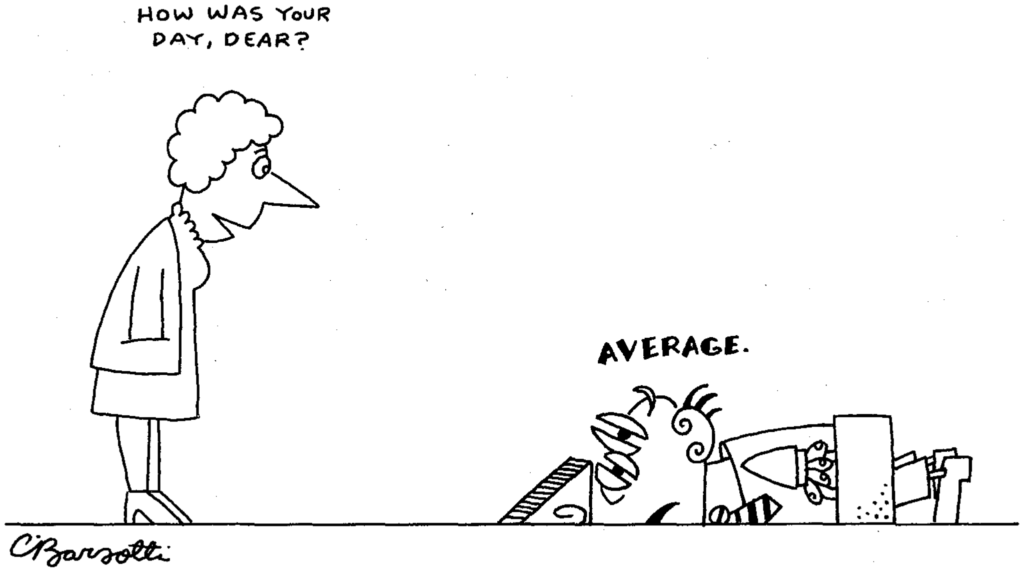
WHAT has befallen Salman Rushdie in recent months defies encapsulation. Time and again, the furor surrounding "The Satanic Verses" (Viking; $19.95) apparently crested, only to erupt in a more vehement, madder guise. One can usually depend on a loose network of contemporary social conditions (among them, the primacy of film over written works, the accelerated turnover of news in our media, and the general din of modern life) to dilute and diffuse any literary controversy, but things have gone otherwise with this novel. When, three months ago, Ayatollah Khomeini issued his "sentence of execution," a sort of infernal standoff was forged: somewhere, in hiding and under police protection, Mr. Rushdie goes on living, but those who would annihilate him remain unplacated. Meanwhile, borders of all sorts—of national sovereignty, of logic, of civilization itself—have given way.

The horrors that have grown up around "The Satanic Verses" make it almost impossible to recollect the time when Rushdie's book seemed merely one controversial novel among many new novels. Yet less than four months ago (to Rushdie, it must seem like four lifetimes ago) he felt free to compose a spirited self-defense for the London *Observer*, in which he lashed out at both the "Thought Police" of militant Islam and the Labour Party politicians who stood ready, in his view, to bargain away creative freedom in a pandering to ethnic voters. But that was before the Ayatollah's decree.

If the various counterdemonstrations in support of "The Satanic Verses" have been heartening reassertions of an artist's right to unfettered expression, Rushdie's sympathizers are left, nonetheless, with a sense of ultimate impotence. In the face of the Ayatollah's pronouncement that the "blasphemer" should be sent "to hell," and that every Muslim should "employ everything he's got, his life and wealth" toward that end, who can grant Rushdie the security of mind and movement which he, as both man and artist, requires? At the moment, little can be done except to comply with his repeated request that his novel be considered as a novel—and that, as such, it be evaluated on its literary merits.

"The Satanic Verses" picks up where Rushdie's last novel, "Shame," left off: in the clouds. "Shame" concluded with a billow of smoke that gradually rose and coalesced into the torso of a man. "The Satanic Verses" begins with a literal bang—the explosion of a hijacked jet as it cruises 29,002 feet over the English Channel—that sends cascading down through a cloud bank "reclining seats, stereophonic headsets, drinks trolleys, motion discomfort receptacles, disembarkation cards, duty-free video games, braided caps, paper cups, blankets, oxygen masks." Among the wreck's "titbits" are "two brown men"—Gibreel Farishta, who was for fifteen years the leading star of Indian cinema, and Saladin Chamcha, who, as the Man of a Thousand Voices, has made a fortune in the British film industry, chiefly in commercials. ("If you wanted to know how your ketchup bottle should talk in its television commercial, if you were unsure as to the ideal voice for your packet of garlic-flavoured crisps, he was your very man.") The two men, neither of them equipped with a parachute, manage not only to survive the descent (they are the disaster's sole survivors) but to bicker and sing and remonstrate with each other on the way down. With characteristic bravado, Rushdie at one stroke casts off the constraints of realism and rings the note of fabulism that echoes throughout this outflung, ambitious novel: "Let's face it: it was impossible for them to have heard one another, much less conversed and also competed thus in song. Accelerating toward the planet, atmosphere roaring around them, how could they? But let's face this, too: they did."

Gibreel and Saladin are linked, it becomes clear, by more than a miraculous escape, careers in film, and Indian ancestry. Their passage together through five and a half miles of sky initiates a number of complementary, surreal transformations. The first of these seems a purely lighthearted touch. Gibreel has long been notorious for what one of his leading ladies has described as "breath of rotting cockroach dung"; but after the two men find themselves deposited, bones unbroken, on an icy stretch of Sussex coast, it is Saladin whose exhalations suggest "ochre clouds of sulphur." It isn't long before other, queerer changes surface: Saladin begins to grow horns and a tail, while Gibreel's head emits a halolike glow. We have entered the realm of Milton's "Paradise Lost"; the novel's opening deto-


HOW WAS YOUR DAY, DEAR?
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nation, the reader comes to see, was nothing less than a fall of angels.

The nascent halo serves as confirmation to Gibreel, who for many months has suspected that he is an incarnation of his namesake Gabriel, the archangel who was sent to Daniel to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat, who served as the agent of the Annunciation to Mary, and who—more to the point in this novel—revealed to Muhammad the principles of Islam. Large portions of the book are set in Arabia in the early decades of the seventh century A.D., during those incendiary years when Muhammad—who is here called Mahound—became a prophet, attracted a small cadre of followers, time and again eluded and outwitted his persecutors, and eventually invested himself with sufficient authority, both moral and military, to insure the ongoing life of his new faith. One measure of the book's ambition is that it chronicles the founding of a world religion as a sideline to its primary plot.

Judith Shahn

I might alternatively say that the whole of the book takes place in the twentieth century, since the sections that depict Muhammad arrive by way of the archangel Gabriel by way of the film star Gibreel. Gabriel's revelations come to Gibreel in dreams. The first dream begins after Gibreel, repudiating the dietary laws of his Islamic upbringing, indulges in what must be called a swinish repast: "He loaded his plate with all of it, the pork sausages from Wiltshire and the cured York hams and the rashers of bacon from godknowswhere; with the gammon steaks of his unbelief and the pig's trotters of secularism." Overindulgence of this sort is commonly associated with bizarre dreams, but Gibreel's dreams continue—steadily, in serial fashion—for months on end. He grows convinced of his celestial nature, and who's to doubt him? Readers who would interpret the dreams as guilt-engendered delusions have that troublesome halo to explain away.

Dreams of one sort or another suffuse the novel. There are violent dreams, paradisal dreams, daydreams and nightmares and dreams within dreams. They take on a life of their own. This is a world of permeable sensibilities, in which dreams often "leak" from one state of consciousness into another, from one person to another.

Whether one ought to view the Muhammad of "The Satanic Verses" as an impressionistic dream amalgamation or as the solid, historical figure who founded Islam, it is difficult to square Rushdie's portrait with the international turmoil that the book has produced. Although there is much here to offend the faithful—Rushdie's Muhammad is a manipulative, lecherous, and somewhat cynical man, and the novel also depicts a brothel that becomes an "anti-mosque" when its dozen prostitutes adopt the names and mannerisms of Muhammad's wives—the book, when taken in its entirety, is so dense a layering of dreams and hallucinations that any attempt to extract an unalloyed line of argument is false to its intention. Rushdie, who was raised a Muslim but says he now holds no religious beliefs, pointed out in his *Observer* article that Muhammad always discouraged his followers' attempts to apotheosize him, and argued further that the portrait in "The Satanic Verses" is consonant with a man who continually stressed his own humanity.

Most American readers, I suspect, will feel unqualified to sort through the byways of the debate. To take but one example, many Muslims are enraged by Rushdie's practice of referring to Muhammad as Mahound—a name, Rushdie acknowledged in his article, "which, long ago, was indeed used as a derogatory term." He justified himself with a passage from "The Satanic Verses": "To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be . . . Mahound." Whether Rushdie's analogy is apt or his choice of names is simply, maliciously offensive (that pun on "prophet" does give one pause) remains—for me, anyway—an unresolved issue. But if the American reader is likely to feel removed from

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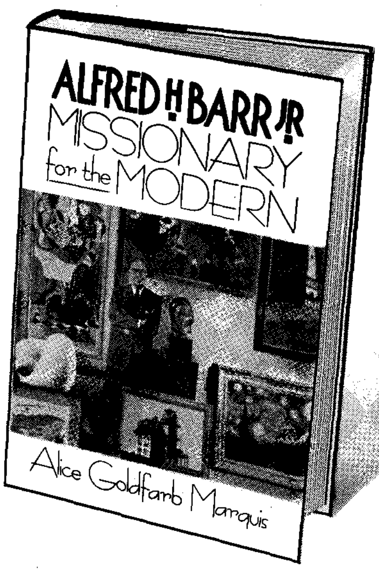

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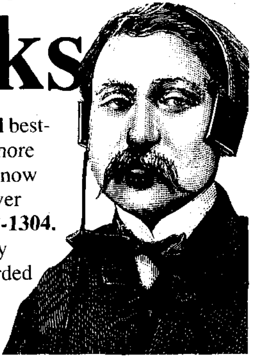

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the controversy's intricacies he will probably enjoy, by way of compensation, an ability to form artistic judgments the more lucidly for not being embroiled in religious issues—to see, specifically, that the weakest portions of the book are those dealing directly with Muhammad. A bridge of dreams, it turns out, is too flimsy and insubstantial a structure to support heavy traffic between the seventh century and the twentieth; the two worlds never completely fuse. In any final accounting, "The Satanic Verses" must stand or fall according to aesthetic criteria. And when the dust settles (or perhaps one should say, given the book burnings, when the smoke clears) it will be evident that "The Satanic Verses" is a book of splendid but segmental components that do not quite cohere into a satisfying whole.

Rushdie is a writer fond of and occasionally besotted with excess. In "The Satanic Verses" he disregards E.M. Forster's distinction between "flat" and "round" characters and seeks to infuse the fullness of life even into peripheral presences. The result is not a sense of enhanced dimensionality so much as of clutter; the propulsion of the tale is forever being retarded by obstructions of its own making. When, for instance, the penmanship of a secondary character is described as "large, looping, back-leaning, left-handed," one can't help thinking that we've been given two, and perhaps three, adjectives too many. A writer blessed with an omnivorous eye, Rushdie at times succumbs to his gift and lets himself be waylaid by any number of things—furniture, faces, advertisements, bibelots, graffiti—that have little bearing on his story.

Still, you must admire the man's titanic energy, proof of which is that his novel, though it runs to more than five hundred pages, often seems too packed but seldom padded. Rushdie has a rare talent for surrealistic invention—an ability to pursue chains of causation and contingency without regard to where they cross or recross the boundary separating the plausible from the fantastic. Curiously, then, the best part of "The Satanic Verses" is a somewhat conventional, thoroughly realistic story. Over the years, Saladin Chamcha, the Man of a Thousand Voices, has grown more English than the English (he weathers his miles of free-fall without losing his bowler), and on one of his trips back to India he is unnerved when a woman named Zeeny Vakil, the first Indian he has ever taken as a lover, speaks of his eventual "reclamation." She prophesies that India is "going to get you back."

Which in some sense it does. After Saladin sheds his satanic horns and tail—his demoniasis (as he thinks of it) departs as mysteriously as it came—he makes another journey to India, to attend to his father, who is dying and from whom he has long been estranged. In the daily business of ministering to a helpless old man—shaving the gaunt cheeks, hauling the atrophied body to the toilet—Saladin discovers a filial love that was lost, seemingly forever, in adolescence, and, what's more, he learns to accept his native country as never before. If the theme of divided loyalties is what might be expected from Rushdie, who was born in Bombay, in 1947, and has spent more than half his life in England, it nonetheless provides the book with the one extended section where the reader's respect and admiration freely give way to something better: empathy.

At times, the punctuation available to writers who work in English looks inadequate to Rushdie's needs. When he composes a novel, the bottom row of his typewriter, where the comma, period, virgule, and question mark are, gets a heavy workout. He's also keen on dashes, hyphens, colons, semicolons, exclamation points, and parentheses. Literary English has undergone a streamlining of punctuation in this century, of course, which can make the reading of fiction written only a hundred years ago seem a slow business—often pleasurably so. Rushdie offers a kindred typographical density. One is not surprised to come across in his fiction an ellipsis followed directly by a question mark and a dash:

> Then whose head, in my own lap, with my own hands . . . ?—who received caresses, spoke of nightmares, and fell at last singing from the sky?

Or, in unbroken succession, an ellipsis, question mark, quotation mark, and dash:

> "Then how can *I* . . . ?"—With which he snatched up his clothes in an untidy bundle, and fled from her presence.

Or an Emily Dickinsonian onslaught of dashes:

> —And someone else, too,—the one with

whom our Saladin fell to earth,—has come; is wandering within.—Chamcha enters the arena; and is amazed.

In other spots he jettisons most punctuation ("Unable to muster the smallest scrap of dignity, he blubbers whimpers pleads beats his breast abases himself repents"), and even tosses out the spaces between words, thereby coining compounds by the dozen ("redwhiteblue," "goodandproper," "whatstheword," "justlikethat," and so forth).

Rushdie's experiments with punctuation reflect his handling of larger questions of style. He treats the language as though he owned it. At his best, he can wrench syntax to the teasing verge of incomprehensibility without losing his reader, or can burden a sentence with such a weight of clauses that it threatens to collapse and yet stands firm. He is a writer of inspired violence. One feels on every page how much he loves to read and write. His books brim with rapid, glancing allusions. In "The Satanic Verses" he nods at—among others—Ovid, Lewis Carroll, Coleridge, Walt Disney, T. S. Eliot, the Wizard of Oz, Shelley, Forster, Little Black Sambo, and Kafka. (Kafka was probably bound to materialize in a book so devoted to physical metamorphoses; in any event, Chamcha's name seems a thickened variant of Kafka's man-turned-beetle Gregor Samsa, and at one point Chamcha is referred to as "the insect on the floor.")

"Shame," which was Rushdie's third novel, was a considerable feat, and "Midnight's Children," his second novel, was probably better still—but it may be that, so far, his most significant accomplishment lies not in narrative but in language, not in an individual book but in the evolution of a nonesuch style. In borrowing easily from Western and Eastern sources and in experimenting so broadly—with punctuation, sentence construction, abrupt shifts of viewpoint, deliberate incongruities of tone—he has developed a voice we haven't heard before.

As one would suspect, he brings to the English-language novel an invigorating influx of Indian cadences (the Bombay interludes of "The Satanic Verses," particularly when Zeeny Vakil speaks, have an irresistible bounce and sparkle), but he does far more than that. His prose blends elevated diction, an exclamatory, car-

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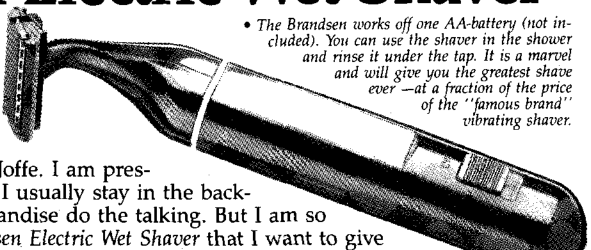

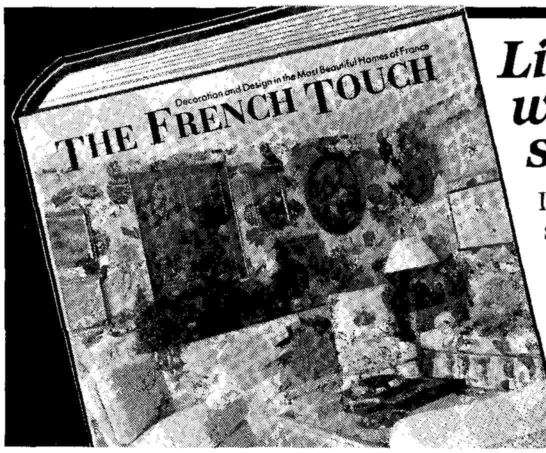

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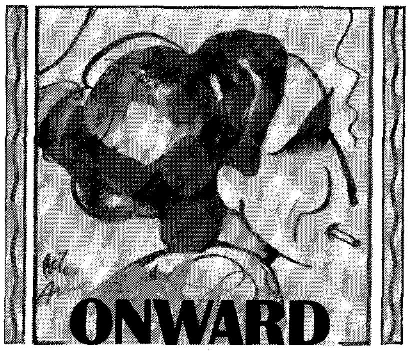

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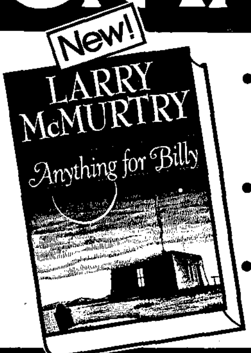

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toony collection of words like "zap" and "boom" and "pow," clanging rhymes ("the jouncing and bouncing of youth," "arms wide, feet with the beat"), reportorial flatness, and a jazzy spontaneity:

> So maybe someone should have been able to forecast, only nobody did, that when he was up and about again he would sotospeak succeed where the germs had failed and walk out of his old life forever within a week of his fortieth birthday, vanishing, poof!, like a trick, *into thin air*.
>
> The city—Proper London, yaar, no bloody *less!*—was dressed in white, like a mourner at a funeral.—Whose bloody funeral, mister, Gibreel Farishta asked himself wildly, not mine, I bloody *hope* and *trust*.
>
> The moment Saladin Chamcha got close enough to Allie Cone to be transfixed, and somewhat chilled, by her eyes, he felt his reborn animosity towards Gibreel extending itself to her, with her degree-zero go-to-hell look, her air of being privy to some great, secret mystery of the universe; also, her quality of what he would afterwards think of as *wilderness*, a hard, sparse thing, anti-social, self-contained, an essence.

In his fondness for needless, playful abbreviations ("as to omnipresence and -potence," "what was possible was possible and what was impossible was im-," "yielding or un-," "whether mortal or im-"), he can even wind up sounding like—of all people!—P. G. Wodehouse; we are not far from Bertie Wooster, lounging in bed while Jeeves carries in "the eggs and b."

The effect of this heterogeneous mixture can be a little wearing. As a stylist, Rushdie is continually breathtaking—and a breathless reader is likely to feel winded at times. There are moments, frankly, when one wishes he would get on with it. Now and then, a sentence slips utterly away from him. His parentheses, in particular, have a python's tendency first to engorge whatever wanders into proximity and then to lie there in a digestive slumber. And his naturally arch temperament has a way—as archness naturally does—of becoming cloying. I don't see how anyone could read the following passages without feeling annoyed by them:

> Love, a zone in which nobody desirous of compiling a human (as opposed to robotic, Skinnerian-android) body of experience could afford to shut down operations, did you down, no question about it, and very probably did you in as well.
>
> Of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they shouldst not eat, and ate. Woman first, and at her suggestion man, acquired the verboten ethical standards, tastily apple-flavoured: the serpent brought them a value system.

Finally, one might wish that Rushdie displayed a greater flair for that variety of beauty whose essence resides in brevity. Although he can produce ravishing imagery, rarely is it of the concentrated type found in those novelists we praise for having a poet's eye. Another novel with an Eastern setting, Forster's "A Passage to India," offers an instructive contrast. It runs about half the length of "The Satanic Verses," and yet no single passage in the latter possesses the distilled beauty that Forster commands when, for instance, he ventures into the Marabar Caves: "There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone." Rushdie, it is true, can enter the mind of either Easterner or Westerner with a conversancy that the more circumspect and wholly English Forster lacked. Still, one sometimes longs, amid the impressive clangor of Rushdie's prose, for the *hushed, suspended moment that comes* when loveliness is wed to concision.

In the light of such reservations, and of the tragedy and fear that have recently engulfed Rushdie's life, it seems worthwhile to point out that even before this book appeared Rushdie was perhaps the only young novelist in the English-speaking world to have legitimate claims to an international reputation. He is prodigiously gifted. He is especially good on the subject of racism; the reader burns with freshened, reawakened indignation, as though apprised of prejudice for the first time. And in the meeting of East and West he appears to have sufficient subject matter for a couple of dozen novels. One of the strengths of "The Satanic Verses" is the way in which his "East" encompasses not merely India but—in its range of subplots and allusions—Southeast Asia, the Middle East, even Morocco. Worlds within worlds, dreams within dreams . . . One comes away from "The Satanic Verses," as from "Shame" and "Midnight's Children," with an inspiriting sense of multiplicity. —BRAD LEITHAUSER

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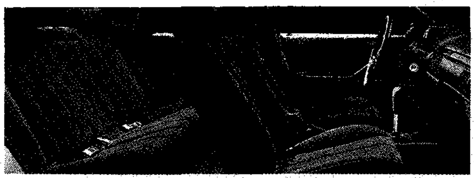

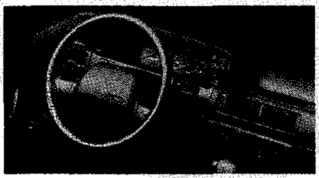

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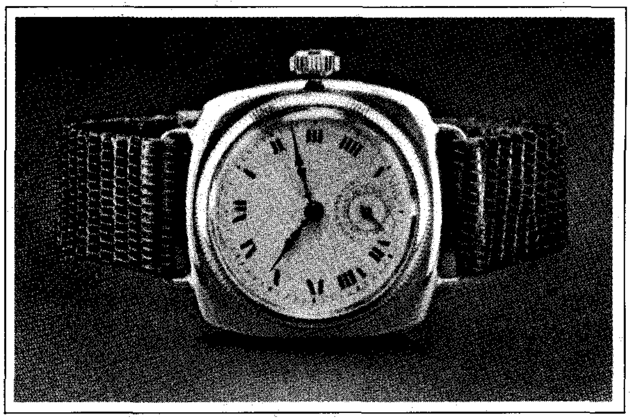

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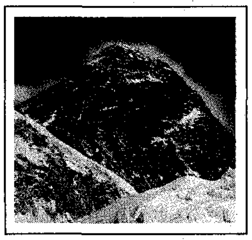

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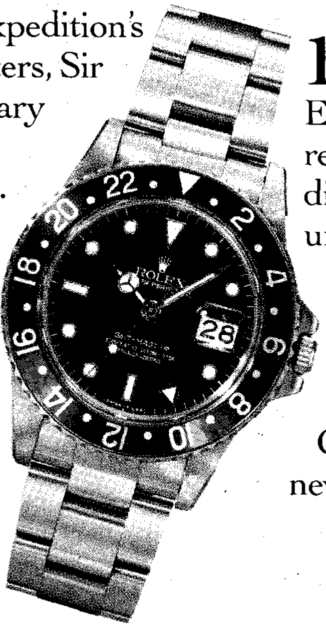

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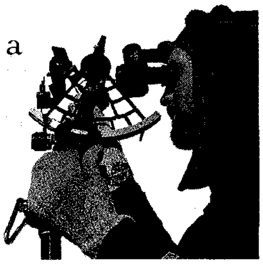

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